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The Shape of Things

RECOGNIZING THAT IT IS INFLATION, NOT strikes, which constitutes the major threat to the defense program, the President last week created an Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, with Leon Henderson as its head. It is not yet known precisely what powers Mr. Henderson will exercise in attempting to stabilize the price structure, but the President's wide powers to commandeer industries that do not cooperate in the defense program would seem to give him adequate authority to deal with any situation. The price situation is not yet critical, but food prices have risen 6 per cent in the past year, textile products have advanced 5 per cent, building materials are up 6.4 per cent. These advances are not so very much smaller than those which occurred in 1915 and the early part of 1916 during the first World War. But Mr. Henderson believes that with appropriate pressure and a judicious use of price "ceilings" it may be possible to avoid the rapid inflation of late 1916 and early 1917. The difficulties are greater than are usually admitted. The recent wage increases granted as a result of labor pressure will undoubtedly be seized upon as a pretext for a general increase of prices. But we think Mr. Henderson will find that in many cases the swollen coffers made possible by capacity operation can easily absorb high wage costs.

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ONCE WHEN HE WAS TAXED WITH THE appointment of the ineffable Judge Herbert O'Brien, Mayor LaGuardia admitted: "When I make a mistake it's a beaut." His Honor has just delivered another beaut. It goes by the name of the Wicks bill, and it is a measure which makes it a felony for an employee of a transportation service, public or private, to leave his vehicle "unattended." The bill, calling for a penalty as high as twenty years' imprisonment, was sent to Albany by the LaGuardia administration and was passed by both houses at his express request. Ostensibly it was designed to prevent a serious traffic tie-up and the stranding of passengers in the event that the Transport Workers' Union calls a subway strike in June. In cold fact transit strikes do not as a rule involve the abandoning of vehicles on public

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streets or subway tracks, and the extreme vagueness of the Wicks bill on this point raises legitimate suspicions that its authors intended it as a weapon for terrorizing would-be strikers. It is all very well for a handful of its proponents to contend that under the terms of the measure drivers can still leave their vehicles at the proper terminals at the end of a run and then go out on strike without violating the law. That is not what the bill says, and if Governor Lehman signs it, would-be strikers will have to stand guard over their charges in barns, garages, and terminals until somebody else appears to relieve them —or take their chances with the courts. At best the bill is loosely drawn and dangerous. At worst it is a devious scheme to deprive transit workers of the right to strike.

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THE MILITARY POSITION OF BRITAIN AND its Allies in the Near East may not be entirely hopeless, but the news is undisguisedly serious and there may be worse to come. As we go to press, the German radio is spreading reports that Yugoslavia has asked for an armistice. We suspect that this story, like those of British plans for evacuating Greece that come from the same source, represents an attempt to supplement the work of the *Panzer* divisions by sowing seeds of doubt, dissension, and panic in the Allied ranks. Reports from other sources suggest that, far from making ready for capitulation, the Yugoslav army is rallying in the western mountains and is striking both at the Italians in northern Albania and at German communications around Skolpje. Meanwhile the Greeks and the British have still to establish a stable defense line, but they seem to have slowed up the German advance, and in the new mechanical warfare the maintenance of momentum is of the utmost importance. The extraordinary ability of the Germans to keep going despite the difficulties of the desert constitutes a major hazard for the British forces in Egypt, thinned as they have been by the necessity of sending aid to Greece. The threat to Suez has now assumed alarming reality.

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THE TROUBLE WITH SENATOR WHEELER IS that he can't get his mind off Europe. Obsessed with affairs across the wide Atlantic, he is rapidly becoming the Horrible Example of how isolationism sweeps its victims along from uttermost neutrality to a sneaking inclination toward the aggressor. The Montana Senator has come so far from his mood of unsullied neutrality that he is now apportioning war guilt, telling audiences who is responsible for the destruction of the French Republic and who has brought England to its present pass. And you may rest assured, Dr. Goebbels, that it is not you and your Führer whom Senator Wheeler finds guilty. Neither is it the spies and agents you sent into France and England, nor the native traitors, nor the fools who tried to appease you by giving you other countries to satisfy your appetite. No, the guilty parties, says Senator Burton K. Wheeler, were the Englishmen and Frenchmen who sought to defend their countries by checking the onrush of the berserk regime of Nazi Germany. These are the warmongers, he says, and "the same type of warmongers will destroy the United States" unless our appeasers prevail. Senator Wheeler's analysis has become one with that of the *Völkischer Beobachter,* and Herr Goebbels may compliment himself on breaking the isolationist shell of a mind that has stood thick and firm against the appeals of every democratic spirit in Europe.

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THE NEW BRITISH BUDGET WITH ITS SHARP increases in direct taxation is frankly directed as much toward cutting down purchasing power as it is toward raising revenue. The gargantuan appetite of the modern war machine takes a huge bite out of a nation's productive capacity and thus reduces the volume of goods available for civilian consumption. But at the same time the increase in government spending wipes out unemployment and greatly swells total money incomes. Enlarged purchasing power in conjunction with a decreased total of goods in the market must lead to higher prices, for inflation is the natural economic remedy for the failure of supply to meet demand, when supply is a fixed quantity. But inflation is also a grossly unfair way of deciding how a limited amount of goods is to be distributed among different categories of income-receivers, since it means that those with rigid incomes bear the whole burden. The most important fiscal job of a war government, therefore, is to trim spendable income until it matches the volume of consumable goods. This can be done by direct taxation of incomes, by indirect taxation of nonessential articles, and by encouraging people to forgo the expenditure of part of their incomes so that they can lend to the state. All these methods have been employed in Britain, but revenue plus private savings have not equaled public expenditure. Consequently the government has been forced to resort to credit inflation through borrowing from the banks.

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UP TO THE END OF LAST YEAR THE COST OF living in Britain had risen by 26½ per cent despite rationing and price restrictions, and the rising tendency continues. The new budget represents a real effort to check this trend by further diminishing spendable incomes. Income tax is raised from a 42½ to a 50 per cent base, while the level at which surtaxes are imposed is lowered from $8,000 to $4,000. At the other end of the scale two million more persons are brought into the income-tax-paying class by reduction of the exemption limit on unmarried persons from $400 to $320 and on

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married couples from $680 to $560. Further, the exemption on one-sixth of earned income is to be reduced to one-tenth. However, the extra tax which anyone pays as a result of smaller earned income and personal allowances will be credited to him after the war in the Post Office Savings Bank. This proposal represents a triumph for Maynard Keynes, who more than a year ago was urging that taxation should be supplemented by compulsory savings so as to balance the relationship between money incomes and purchasable goods. The drastic increases in income tax suggested by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer are expected to swell revenue to nearly one-half of total expenditure, as compared with less than one-third for the fiscal year which ended March 3. Real savings, it is hoped, will finance most of the remainder. However, actual expenditure has been steadily forging ahead of estimates ever since the war started, and this budget may prove inadequate. It may be necessary for Britain to adopt a proposal now being discussed in London for a strict limitation of everyone's weekly or monthly expenditure.

*

THE AXIS OIL SUPPLY HAS CLAIMED NEW attention as a result of the Balkan campaign. For the campaign not only requires huge supplies of liquid fuel but has been taking place perilously close to the chief sources of supply. A large part of Rumania's oil is shipped to Germany by way of the Danube, and this traffic has been temporarily interrupted at the Iron Gates by concrete barges sunk by the Yugoslavs. Unfortunately for the Reich, much of the Soviet oil is also transported on the Danube. Although it may be assumed that the Germans will soon clear the river of obstructions, the tie-up and resulting shortage of barges will undoubtedly make an appreciable dent in this year's deliveries. Considerable speculation has arisen as to why Great Britain has not taken advantage of its position in Greece to bomb the Rumanian oil fields. Hanson Baldwin, writing in the New York *Times,* has pointed out that Britain has neither the planes nor the landing fields in Greece necessary for such a task. Furthermore, he declares, the wells are so scattered and so well capped, and the pipe lines so effectively buried, that they do not provide really good targets. The stakes, however, are so high that we should not be surprised to see an attack attempted if Britain is able to hold on to its Greek bases.

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THE ADVENTURES OF LOYALIST SPAIN'S jewels make a romantic story as Louis Fischer tells it. But it is a discreet story, minimizing, as good romance is likely to do, the political significance of the events described. Mr. Fischer ventures only the comment that Indelacio Prieto, who grabbed the treasure on its arrival in Mexico, "could use the money to assist Spanish refugees." That Prieto has failed to do so is admitted. No loyalist refugees have escaped from France on the proceeds of a single black pearl. And thousands of them, waiting in vain for ships and help, must have wondered why. The difficulties of getting Spaniards out of France are great, as we point out on another page. But money and political influence are powerful levers, and Prieto could have employed both to break the diplomatic log jam and free the men to whom he owes his loyalty. Instead he has sat tight on his cache of jewels presumably awaiting the day when they can be employed in more politically useful ways. And he has also tried to sit tight on the Vita, the yacht which carried the treasure to Mexico. When troops arrived the other day to take over the yacht as a foreign vessel harboring in a Mexican port, Prieto was found on deck armed with a pistol, a heroic position from which he was immediately removed. It is unfortunate that he cannot be as readily pried loose from the jewels.

War of Ships

THE crashing advances of the German *Panzer* divisions in the Balkans and in North Africa have monopolized the headlines during the past week. Yet grave as the turn of events in the Near East is, we must recognize that the focal point of danger is still the Atlantic.

The toll of the U-boats and the German long-range bombers has been rising. Revised British figures of March sinkings give a total of 375,000 tons, and we must presume a proportionate quantity of damaged shipping to add to the pressure on British yards. If the present rate of loss is maintained throughout the rest of this year it is estimated that five million tons of ships and their cargoes will disappear beneath the waves of the Atlantic. Hampered by air raids, the British shipbuilding industry is unlikely to produce more than one million tons of new ships in the course of the year. In this country we are rapidly expanding our shipbuilding capacity, and in 1942 we may be able to turn out three million gross tons. But during the crucial current year most experts agree that output will not exceed one million tons.

The perilous position in the Near East is very closely connected with the shortage of shipping. Britain had troops to spare for Greece, but the transport of a division with full equipment requires 100,000 tons of shipping, and by the Cape route the round trip would have taken four months. According to Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, the original British plan to send six divisions to the Balkans was abandoned because the necessary ships could not be spared, and instead three divisions were organized by drawing heavily on the army in Libya. The very painful consequences are now visible.

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In Britain itself the shipping shortage is reflected by a growing stringency in the food situation. There does not, as yet, seem to be actual hunger, but belts are tightening and the standard of diet is deteriorating. For example, lack of feed for cattle, much of which is normally imported, is diminishing the milk supply. In this country we find supplies for Britain, either bought outright or furnished by means of the Lease-Lend Act, piling up on the docks. In February exports from the United States to the whole British Empire totaled only $180 million as compared with $224 million in January, and the amount dispatched to Britain itself was only $77 million.

Compare these figures with the quantities of goods which can be made available under the new authority granted to the President. The total appropriation under the Lease-Lend Act is $7 billions, and while much of the material represented by this sum cannot be delivered until new production facilities are completed, it is believed that military and other equipment in stock and foodstuffs amounting together to $500 million could be made available almost immediately. But if half the goods we supply remains on the docks and a sizable fraction of what is actually shipped ends at the bottom of the sea, the Lease-Lend Act is going to be reduced to a fairly impotent gesture.

The Administration has recently taken a number of steps to improve the situation. Congress is being asked to approve a bill making possible the purchase of the thirty-nine Danish vessels placed in custody of the Coast Guard a few weeks ago, and the question of confiscating the sabotaged Axis ships which were seized at the same time is under consideration. The President has also lifted the ban on the entry of American merchant vessels into the Red Sea and adjacent waters on the ground that, with the defeat of the Italians in East Africa, this is no longer a belligerent area. This move may make possible the direct shipping of supplies to Egypt for the use of Britain, Greece, and Yugoslavia, but unhappily it is by no means certain that such help will arrive in time to be of use. A fourth step toward alleviating the British shipping position is the agreement signed with the Danish minister, Henrik de Kauffmann, for American protection of Greenland. This action is partly defensive, for as Joachim Joesten points out on page 471, there is little doubt that the Nazis have been taking a more than scientific interest in that island. But it may also make possible the opening of a summer route to Britain for both planes and ships.

It must be recognized, however, that all these measures are at best palliatives. If Britain is to pull through this year it must have the use of more ships and it must find means of affording them better protection; for the tonnage available in the world for the use of the democratic nations is dangerously near the margin of safety. With its import needs enlarged by the defense program this country has now few if any ships to spare for Britain. Some might be transferred from coastal routes and their freights switched to the railroads. But the most obvious way of economizing shipping which remains open is the formation of an Anglo-American shipping pool operating under a joint high command which could decide questions of priorities, coordinate routings, and prevent congestion in ports.

Yet, however efficiently shipping is used, losses will continue to be heavy unless the North Atlantic passage can be better guarded. This is the question we must face, for it is a question which will be decided by the public rather than the President, who is unlikely to make a move involving the risk of "a shooting war" unless certain of popular support. And in reaching a decision we must remember that our alternative to providing convoys is not sitting tight and playing safe. We are confronted with a choice of risks. Convoys may bring us fully into the war, but unless the U-boats are mastered, Hitler is very likely to win a complete victory. And such an outcome to the war, the country is agreed, would place in deadly jeopardy the United States and all it stands for. That is the major premise on which both the defense program and aid to Britain are based. Can we afford to ignore the logical conclusion?

Ford Knuckles Under

THAT troglodyte of American labor relations, Henry Ford, has finally been brought to his knees. The success achieved by the United Automobile Workers in forcing the manufacturer for the first time to deal with representatives of union labor, outside a few skilled trades, is a historic victory for the American working class. Bethlehem and Ford were the major holdouts left against the Wagner Act, and their submission will mark the firm establishment of collective bargaining in the mass-production industries. Day-to-day shifts in the struggle and the ebb and flow of public opinion make it hard for contemporaries to realize the progress unionism has made since 1937. Ford's example was an encouragement to diehard industrialists, a symbol of the determination of some big business men to remain above the law, and the union's victory is also in the true sense a victory for law and order and for democratic processes. No doubt Ford and his strong-arm squad will try their best to wriggle out of the situation in which they find themselves, but in our opinion a decisive battle has been won. The spontaneous strike at the River Rouge plant shows how deeply Ford employees have come to resent the spy-ridden dictatorship under which they have been forced to live, and the spirit demonstrated in the strike can only be strengthened if Ford goes back to his old tactics.

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The strength of the strike spirit was in fact as much a surprise to the union as to Ford, and if the House Military Affairs Committee is really interested is getting at the facts behind recent strikes it might profitably ask Ford a few questions. Why were Ford officials mysteriously unavailable during the first eight or nine hours of the stoppage when union officials, at the request of Governor Van Wagoner, were trying to get in touch with them and stop the strike? And why did Ford officials persist in turning down the union's offer to permit its men to go on working on the few defense contracts Ford has. There is good ground to suspect that Ford (1) welcomed the strike and (2) wanted work to stop on the defense contracts so that he might have an excuse to break the strike and weaken the union. The Ford strike, like recent walkouts at Bethlehem, illustrates the fact that the defense argument cuts both ways and that if unions handle themselves wisely they can benefit by the defense program to force recalcitrant employers to obey the law. We recommend to our friends on the extreme left study of the contrast between the whooping and hallooing by a few Southern Legrees in Congress and by the press and the recent victories won by labor on the picket line and before the Mediation Board. The Coxes and the Sumnerses provide excellent copy for the *Daily Worker*, but fortunately neither they nor our newspapers are representative of a majority of the American people.

The artificially created hysteria in Congress and the press has begun to abate. The strike in Big Steel has been averted with the granting of the union's demand for an increase in wages of 10 cents an hour, retroactive to April 1. At this writing a settlement of the coal strike, at least in the Northern mines, seems imminent. The successes of the National Mediation Board in dealing with some of the most troublesome disputes have taken the wind out of the sails of those who were hoping to make defense an excuse for depriving American workers of their rights. The anti-labor House Military Affairs Committee is continuing its hearings this week, but the President's refusal to permit J. Edgar Hoover to testify will deprive it of some sensational headlines. The testimony of Secretary Perkins on the inaccuracy of Hoover's information on "communistic influences" in the Vultee strike raises the question of whether he is still using the odoriferous "Red" Hynes as his chief liaison man for Los Angeles and Southern California. The matter-of-fact survey presented to the committee by Miss Perkins on the remarkably small number of strikes we have had was overshadowed only by the testimony of Knudsen on the mysterious stories of sabotage in the Ford plant during the strike. Ford officials asserted that $1,000,000 worth of machine tools was destroyed during the strike. Knudsen said he "could hardly believe" these reports. He said even Nazi raids on Coventry hadn't been able to do that much damage to machine tools.

Food and Refugees

SEVERAL weeks have passed since the Vichy authorities peremptorily disembarked a group of Spanish refugees who, with all the necessary papers, were on board a ship bound for Mexico via Martinique. It has been established beyond question that Vichy's action was the result of direct pressure from Berlin and Madrid. Hitler has forbidden Spanish refugees of military age to leave France because, according to his own statement, he considers them presumptive enemies no matter where they go. Franco, for his part, is determined that no more Republican leaders shall escape from Europe because he fears that they may some day return to lead the discontented masses in a revolt against his rule. Although he has not yet persuaded Vichy to repatriate many of the former Loyalist leaders, he believes Vichy will ultimately tire of feeding them and turn them back voluntarily.

The Mexican government has vigorously protested this flagrant violation of the Vichy-Mexican agreement of last fall whereby the refugees came under its diplomatic protection. But against the combination of Hitler, Franco, and Pétain, Mexico is of course practically helpless. No country except the United States is in position to bring effective pressure on Vichy and Madrid to obtain the release of the refugees, and so far there is no indication that Washington is making use of its power. During the present week three American Red Cross ships are scheduled to sail for Europe with food. Two of these are bound for unoccupied France and one for Spain. Others will presumably follow. Under present arrangements the ships are scheduled to return empty across the Atlantic. An unofficial dispatch from Vichy suggests that the food for Spain be made conditional on permission for the refugees to leave France. We should prefer to go a step further and insist that no more food be furnished to either Vichy or Madrid unless the ships are permitted to return with Spanish refugees destined for Mexico. Vichy cannot openly oppose such terms, since the departure of the refugees would materially alleviate its own food shortage. Franco would hardly dare oppose it in view of the critical food situation in Spain. The only real opposition, presumably, would come from Hitler, who is not particularly concerned with keeping either Frenchmen or Spaniards from starvation.

The situation boils down to the question whether either Vichy or Madrid has any existence except as a Hitler puppet. It may well be that they do not. But if this is the case, it is useless to pretend that the food being shipped to unoccupied France and to Spain is being sent against Nazi wishes. Under these circumstances the shipments ought to be stopped outright. If, on the other hand, the puppet regimes possess a certain bargaining power of their own, however restricted, it is

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obvious that the United States should take the utmost advantage of that fact. Recent uncensored reports from Spain appearing in the *Christian Science Monitor* indicate that Franco, at least, does possess a type of bargaining power. The food situation is reported to be so critical that Hitler dare not pass through Spain en route to Gibraltar lest revolt be provoked which could only be put down at great cost. In case the United States imposed conditions for the delivery of food, Hitler would have a choice between submitting to the conditions or digging into his own meager food reserves.

It is useless to rail at Hitler and Franco for their inhumanity or at Vichy for its weakness when our own State Department has failed to use its considerable power to save the Spanish Republican refugees. There are those who say that Washington in this respect is as hopeless as Vichy. But we dare not accept this verdict.

Blitzkrieg and Dismay

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

THE most important effect of the Nazi drive in the Balkans and North Africa will be its effect on American opinion. Lives lost, territory cynically shunted from one sovereignty to another, ancient cities devastated, even the conquest of valuable resources and strategic positions—all these in the end will matter less than would a growth of fear and hopelessness in America. Already this mood is beginning to be expressed; it will be fostered and politically exploited by every defeatist group; unconditionally it must be rooted out of the American mind. For if fear should become a dominant factor in the making of American policy, not a campaign but a war—and the hope of democratic survival—will be lost. Hitler is advancing in the East, as he advanced in the West a year ago, over the bodies of nations which had been disarmed, politically and physically, by terror. Even the magnificent tenacity of the Greeks and the courage of the Yugoslavs are proving a poor substitute for a long-sighted policy of combination and preparation.

The Battle of the Balkans is not ended. In Greece the British forces have not yet, as we go to press, engaged the Nazis in force. The Allied lines are being reformed in the mountains, and British reinforcements are said to be coming in from East Africa. And Russia's sensational agreement with Japan creates new possibilities. The flood of contradictory interpretations of that move are evidence enough of the ambiguity of the newest Moscow line. It seems clear at least that, whatever its effect in Europe, the pact with Japan cannot but help the Axis by increasing the direct threat to British positions in South Asia. But this help may be partly offset in the Balkans. Moscow's anger at Hungary's cynical invasion of Yugoslavia and its continued verbal support of the Yugoslavs are significant; no nation—and surely not the Soviet Union—incurs the displeasure of the Third Reich just for the moral satisfaction of it. Russia may be forced to defend its own frontiers, and the settlement with Japan certainly puts it in a position to face that risk with some show of strength. A show of strength may in turn avert open conflict—such is the logic of war diplomacy. It may even give Stalin a bargaining position from which he can pick off, without fighting for them, the Carpatho-Russian lands handed over to Hungary after Munich.

But no discernible combination of events seems likely to prevent a German victory in the Balkans, with Nazi rule running at least to the Dardanelles and the Russian frontier. The threat to Irak and the Suez Canal, though less imminent, is obviously a real one. And behind these military possibilities lie their political consequences, less tangible but just as important. What will be the effect of Hitler's successes on the Arab world, on Latin America, on the underground opposition in the Nazi-occupied countries, and, finally, on public opinion in America?

I spoke the other day to a group of college women in New Jersey—alert, middle-class suburbanites, well-read and interested in public affairs. I talked about Latin America and the way the Axis threat had affected opinion in the various countries. After the meeting a woman said to me in a puzzled tone: "You seem so certain that we can tolerate only one outcome of this war—a defeat of Hitler. But suppose it doesn't work that way. Most of the people here in this room want Britain to win. And we want the United States to help Britain win. But suppose Britain loses? If that should happen, a lot of the things Lindbergh has said would make sense. That's the way it seems to us. We'd have to get on with Europe somehow, Hitler or no Hitler. And so would Latin America. Isn't that so? And aren't you going too far when you assume Hitler *must* be defeated?"

That woman expressed an anxiety and division of feeling that haunt a large proportion of our people today—people who are not wholly pacifist or isolationist, and surely not pro-Nazi, but whose minds hang in a permanent state of unresolved doubt. Such people have been legion in every non-fascist country. They are the Britishers who anxiously, eagerly welcomed Chamberlain back from Munich and nourished their diminishing hopes on his promise of peace. They are the French who raised their shoulders at the idea of dying for Danzig. They are the Argentines or Brazilians who today prefer to keep an open mind about Nazi intentions in Latin America rather than alienate a nation which may control the world market for meat or coffee. They are just people—with a normal desire for a decent peaceful life who shrink from facts which war with that desire.

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The effect of Hitler's successes in the Balkans and in Africa on this mass of unresolved opinion will be bad. Half consciously many minds will run for cover, taking shelter under convenient rationalizations. They will afford an easy target for the various pro-Axis propagandists—from right to left. In the United States they will present an obstacle to the swift application of measures demanded by the changing emergency.

It will be a major and necessary job for the Administration to crystallize this amorphous opinion behind a program which must be the more bold and drastic the further Hitler pushes his armies. I have long believed that the President and his chief colleagues should supplement their policies with a much more frank and continuous exposition of them. In spite of Mr. Roosevelt's open defiance of Axis intentions and the eloquent testimony of the Lease-Lend Act, each step in the Administration's policy has been taken or proposed with a minimum of explanation. And each possible future step has been dismissed as improbable: the question of convoys is a good case in point. Even more serious, the meaning of fascism, for the world and for the United States, has been too often forgotten in the stress of military development and the need to hurry the job of preparing a defense.

The political nature of the struggle in which we are engaged needs constant clarification. It is necessary for Americans to be made aware of the lines of battle that cut across national boundaries. We must learn to feel that our cause is one, not only with British airmen over the Channel and Greeks in their mountain passes, but with Spanish Loyalists rotting in French concentration camps and French dockworkers demonstrating for Yugoslavia in the streets of Marseilles. We must know that this war is being fought in newspapers in Buenos Aires and in factories in Norway. We must believe that it can never end until the concrete realities of freedom have been reconquered by free men. The courageous and lofty words of Croce on another page of this issue express the only true philosophy for the struggle against fascism.

The United States plainly intends to give all possible aid to the nations that are still holding out against Nazi aggression. We have set our face against a world run by Hitler. If such a world is born out of this war, it will be over our defeated efforts. We have desired to limit our efforts to moral support and material aid. We have believed that our best chance of avoiding armed conflict lay in multiplying supplies for Britain and speeding their delivery. We have believed that the alternative would be a fascist victory and our own more certain involvement in the war. But the course we have followed also involves the danger of war; and we are not going to turn back from it as the danger increases.

This I believe to be our actual policy and the only one we can afford to adopt. It is a policy which calls for great courage and determination, and these grow only out of understanding. It is the manifest duty of a national Administration which—at least in the person of the President—understands the political meaning of this struggle constantly to clarify it for the people. Otherwise American policy will have to be carried through in the face of doubt and anxiety, and the way of the appeaser will be made easy.

The TNEC Recommends—What?

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, April 12

IT IS said that the truth shall make men free, but this is only so if they are prepared to act upon it. I think this is the text on which to sum up the work of the TNEC. Mr. Roosevelt's proposal three years ago for a monopoly inquiry was the greatest message he ever sent to Congress, and it will prove to our supercilious posterity that we knew very well what was wrong with us, even if we never got up courage enough to do more than swallow aspirin tablets. "Unhappy events abroad," Mr. Roosevelt said on April 29, 1938, "have retaught us two simple truths." One was that liberty is endangered "if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself." The other was that "the liberty of a democracy is not safe if its business system does not provide employment and produce and distribute goods in such a way as to sustain an acceptable standard of living." In these sentences the one great democratic leader of our time provided the epitaph of an age.

If these opening remarks have the flavor of a post-mortem it is because I have just finished reading the final report of the TNEC. The committee has brilliantly paraphrased the instructions given it by the President, and it is not easy to throw off the spell of its rhetoric. I give a sample sentence. "If the political structure is designed to preserve the freedom of the individual," the report declares manfully, "the economic structure must not be permitted to destroy it." This seems to be the energetic language of men rolling up their sleeves, but as

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one reads further it appears that this is but an interlude between the coffee and the marrons glacés. It is after-dinner statesmanship. When the committee gets down to the job of outlining a program of action its recommendations are ignominiously trivial. It spent three years digging up the facts, and then reinterred them with as much dispatch as was decently possible.

Investigations like those of the TNEC and its many predecessors serve several purposes. They turn the nation into a vast schoolroom for instruction in the ABC's of our economic life. This the TNEC did, though in some fields, notably milk and insurance, the committee was careful not to look too far beneath the surface. These inquiries make the passage of social-reform programs possible by putting a few masters of enterprise in the pillory and letting the public have a good look at them in their moral undershirts. This is what Samuel Untermyer in his conduct of the Pujo inquiry did for Woodrow Wilson and what Ferdinand Pecora and Hugo Black later did for Franklin D. Roosevelt. But some smart press agent put the TNEC off the track very early in its career with the phrase "witch hunt." The practice of calling a spade a shovel was thus given a bad name, and the committee's conclusions were kept as innocuous as possible.

Congressional investigations are supposed to outline programs that come within shooting range of the evils uncovered. In this respect the TNEC, for all its 500-foot shelf of testimony and monographs, will not bear comparison with the best inquiries of the past. The recommendations of the Pujo committee in 1913 anticipated and surpassed the stock-market, banking, and security-selling reforms instituted by the New Deal. The original idea for the Wagner Act may be found, with much else, in the final report made by Basil M. Manly as director of the Industrial Relations Commission in 1916.

But aside from what seem to be excellent proposals to eliminate the use of the patent as an instrument of monopoly, the guttering candles lit by the TNEC will provide no beacons for the future. Its recommendations on insurance are the worst of all. Of industrial insurance, the greatest racket in the business, plundering the poor and ignorant, the report says, "A fundamental change in the conduct of industrial insurance should occur." The sentiment is unassailable. And if it doesn't occur? Then, the committee says daringly, "its eventual elimination may be necessary." And on what are we to rely for the fundamental change? "The primary responsibility for the change lies with the companies issuing such insurance and the states which supervise them." A campaign of scare stories calculated to make holders of life insurance believe that the TNEC was about to Sovietize their savings frightened the committee into limiting its proposals for federal supervision to a few timid suggestions. These are prefaced with a choice bit of understatement. If these suggestions are not adopted, the committee ventures, "state regulation may eventually decay."

One way to strike at monopoly would be to abolish the holding company. The way to do it would be to revive older laws which forbade one corporation to hold stock in another. The evils of the holding company have been demonstrated over and over again in railroad finance, in utilities, and in industry as a whole. As late as 1914 Bouvier's law dictionary was quoting legal authority to the effect that "the most vicious of all the provisions in the [corporation] statutes . . . is that authorizing one corporation to own and vote stock in another." The committee, after proposing to plug one of the loopholes in the Clayton Act in a way which would give the judicially enfeebled Federal Trade Commission a check on mergers, does make a recommendation on holding companies. But it seems to face two ways at once. It "recommends an outright prohibition on the acquisition of stock in or holding-company control of competing companies," but "with suitable exceptions for bona fide investments and the control of true subsidiaries by parent corporations." The second part of the sentence seems to cancel the first, as is true of the explanation which follows: "These recommendations would . . . outlaw stock acquisition and the holding company as methods of combining competing corporations without disturbing the legitimate use of the holding-company device in the relations between parent and subsidiary companies." After a forthright proposal of this kind one is prepared for the separate statement appended to the report by the TNEC's vice-chairman, the Texas sage, Hatton W. Sumners. Sumners thinks that what is really wrong is that we "have forgotten that there is a living God." Though he proposes the electric chair for strikers, Sumners thinks prayer drastic enough for the malefactions of big business.

Feeble and equivocal as are the committee's proposals to deal with "the growth of private power," they are sturdy by comparison with its nebulous and wordy treatment of the problem of providing steady employment and a better distribution of income. In three short paragraphs dealing with "the lower third" of our population the committee is satisfied with "nothing short of a program specifically designed to amplify their daily diet, to train them for suitable occupations, to make available the benefits of low-cost housing, and to give them opportunity to develop their cultural attributes." To achieve this the members of the committee boldly "commend such efforts as the food-stamp plan, slum clearance and low-cost housing, the extension of hospital and medical facilities, and the development of vocational and cultural programs for the less privileged of our people." The committee might at least have been specific enough to propose free piano lessons for share-croppers.

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Can Tammany Come Back?

BY WILL CHASAN

NEW YORK CITY may be in for a rude shock next November. Two successive victories by Reform Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia have fostered the impression that Tammany Hall, corrupt ruler of New York politics for more than a century, has been finally deposed. But a cold appraisal of the city's rival political forces does not encourage this view. There is reason to believe that the political alignment which kept Democratic bosses in office until LaGuardia's first election in 1933 has not been basically altered, and may reassert itself this fall.

Most New Yorkers do not realize that LaGuardia's triumphs in 1933 and 1937 were not the result of a permanent shift in political strength. Both were produced by unusual combinations of circumstances. His election in 1933 was aided by the Seabury committee's graft disclosures, but would have been impossible had there not been a split in the Democratic Party. His total vote—421,689 on the Fusion ticket and 446,883 on the Republican—was 327,000 less than the combined vote of the rival Democratic candidates, O'Brien and McKee. His reelection in 1937 was due largely to a huge labor-party vote which has since declined and to dissension in the Democratic Party, whose strength was vitiated by a bitter primary fight. Another factor was the findings of the Dewey investigation, which were announced shortly before Election Day. The Democratic machine, in brief, was defeated by a temporary piling up of misfortune and not by a superior political force.

Nor is any such force on the city's political horizon. The Republicans, senior partners in the LaGuardia coalition, have been strengthened by offices and patronage which have accrued to them as a result, but they are still a hopeless minority. This is not entirely unfortunate, since the Republican organization in New York is not distinguished for its liberalism and its concern for clean government is strictly that of a party out of power. The Fusion Party's influence is a thing of the past. In 1933 it was the channel through which popular indignation against municipal corruption expressed itself, but it has since disintegrated. Indignation is no lasting basis for a political party, and Fusion's divergent elements had nothing else to hold them together. The American Labor Party, third of the triumvirate linked against Tammany, polled 483,000 votes for LaGuardia in 1937, its first foray into municipal politics. Political observers thought that it might play David to the Democratic Party's Goliath. However, like Fusion, it is now in decline, although for quite different reasons, one of them being the disruptive effect of a Communist clique. Despite internal difficulties, the A. L. P. might have achieved (conceivably it still may) sufficient strength to divert the course of New York politics permanently into new channels. Its failure to do so stems from the same lack of political acumen that has capsized most liberal parties in the past. "What reformers don't get," Frank Hague told George Creel in 1936, is that "politics is a business" and "not a revival meeting." The A. L. P. leaders have been no exception. The end of the party's influence is by no means in sight, but its present debility does not brighten the outlook.

Mayor LaGuardia

Although the city administration has eluded its grasp for more than seven years, the Democratic Party is not gravely weakened. Its clubs have not been so completely cut off from the patronage troughs as is popularly believed. The Bronx and Kings County administrations remain in its hands, and numerous jobs have been retained in other boroughs. Generous amounts of federal and state patronage have helped to build up a fairly substantial political diet. The essential vigor of the Democratic machine is shown in its continuing ability to dominate local elections, probably the clearest test of straight party strength. Practically the entire Democratic slate of state assemblymen and senators has regularly been voted in, and in 1939, the year of the last City Council election, it obtained a two-thirds majority. A significant aspect of the 1939 elections was the defeat of several candidates specifically indorsed by LaGuardia.

Against this background the outlook for the reform groups is distinctly unfavorable. It is unlikely that Democratic chieftains will make the mistake of naming a candidate associated in the public mind with the party's unsavory past. It is worth noting that Manhattan's Tammany leaders, mostly deeply incriminated in that past, will not decide the party's choice. In political termi-

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nology Tammany is still synonymous with the New York Democratic Party, but actual control of party policy passed out of its hands more than a decade ago as a result of the growth of other boroughs. Moreover, since 1933 its prestige has declined because it has been less successful than the Bronx and Brooklyn organizations in electing its candidates. The position of Tammany leaders within the party has been further undermined by Roosevelt, whose animus against them dates back to 1932, when at Smith's behest they opposed his nomination. This hostility, among other things, has deprived them of choice federal patronage such as federal judiciary appointments. In Bronx and Brooklyn these have been guided by organization recommendations, but in Manhattan appointments Tammany has been ignored. Power to decide party policy and select candidates now reposes in Bronx and Brooklyn leaders, and the Democratic candidate will be designated by them.

Although there are no definite indications of who will be the candidate, the two names most frequently mentioned are William O'Dwyer, Brooklyn district attorney who cleaned up Murder, Inc., and Sam Foley, Bronx district attorney and close associate of the national chairman of the Democratic Party, Bronx Democratic boss Ed Flynn. Flynn's recent offer to withdraw Foley is part of some intricate bargaining with Brooklyn leaders, and does not necessarily remove him from the picture. In any case, O'Dwyer would make the better candidate because he is more widely known and has a forceful personality and a good labor record, acquired during a term as Brooklyn county judge. Brooklyn Democrats like O'Dwyer, and he is popular among Tammany leaders. Some of the latter are skeptical of the kind of mayor he would make because, as one of them told the writer, "O'Dwyer was a cop and he'd probably think that everybody was a crook. He'd lean over backwards and be hard to deal with." The same leader suggested that Foley might make a less effective campaigner but a better mayor. "Foley," he said, "has a reputation for honesty, but would be less difficult than O'Dwyer." Either O'Dwyer or Foley probably could win easily against any candidate but LaGuardia.

However, it is fairly certain that LaGuardia will run, although he has not yet announced his candidacy. It is even reported that Roosevelt is trying to get the Democratic nomination for him. Flynn, who holds the whip hand in New York Democratic politics by virtue of his control of state and federal patronage, intimated as much several weeks ago in a speech in North Carolina. But an effort to impose LaGuardia on the Democratic Party probably would fail. The opposition of Tammany, in Manhattan, and of embittered district leaders in other boroughs could thwart it. The attempt, moreover, would disrupt the Democratic organization sufficiently to insure LaGuardia's victory should he then turn around and accept the nomination from a Republican-Fusion-American Labor Party alliance. Even indorsement by Roosevelt, who is indebted to LaGuardia for his help in the last Presidential campaign, might easily have the same effect.

LaGuardia as a Democratic Party candidate seems incongruous, but some Democrats feel that his nomination might be good strategy. It would guarantee the election of every other important Democratic candidate without a knock-down-and-drag-out fight. LaGuardia would be mayor, but he would be a hostage of the Democratic Party—a restless, irascible, vitriolic hostage, but a hostage none the less. The strategy has a precedent; in 1903 Boss Murphy placed two leading Fusionists on the Tammany ticket.

The outcome of a straight contest between LaGuardia and O'Dwyer or Foley or any candidate of equal caliber who has the solid backing of the Democratic Party is difficult to predict at this point without the aid of a crystal globe. LaGuardia has been an excellent mayor, and he has enormous personal popularity and the advantage of office. On the other hand, it is questionable that these can compensate for the decline in organizational support caused by the weakening of Fusion and the Labor Party. In 1937 Fusion polled 159,000 votes for LaGuardia, but there is little chance that it now can muster more than 100,000. A factor which may cut further into the Fusion vote is that last year many influential Fusion backers supported Willkie and were indignant over LaGuardia's stand for Roosevelt. Obviously the same is true of numerous Republicans. It hardly seems within the realm of political possibility that the Republican Party will bolt LaGuardia entirely, since that would mean forfeiting the very tangible benefits of their association. But there is a chance that sections of the Republican organization might find inducements for doing so.

The Labor Party's 483,000 votes in 1937 probably will dwindle to less than 300,000. Its inability to poll more than 317,000 for Roosevelt last November is an indication of this. Moreover, important sections of the party, notably the New York County organization, are under Communist influence, and hostile to the Mayor. Ironically, the labor vote which supplied his margin of victory in 1937 may prove LaGuardia's undoing in 1941. The left-wing C. I. O. unions which provided his most vigorous labor advocates in the last election now view him with disfavor. The old-line A. F. of L. unions have always been Tammany adjuncts and can be counted on to remain in the Democratic camp. A candidate like O'Dwyer would enable them to do so without losing face. Barring Roosevelt's indorsement or some unexpected turn of events, these influences could pull LaGuardia's vote below the victory line. Only a first-rate conflict in the Democratic Party, like the one which hopelessly split it in 1933, would permit the election of any Republican candidate other than LaGuardia.

What is important is that no matter who emerges as

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mayor next November, the old Democratic machines will still be around and dominant. They will control the City Council and possibly the Board of Estimate and other key positions. Without a drastic change of fortune for either Fusion or the Labor Party, which there is no reason to expect, LaGuardia's reelection would simply postpone their complete capture of the city. Democratic leaders intimate that the party has reformed and that if they are intrusted with office there will be no repetition of the Walker scandals. Some of them may even believe this, but talk of a reformed Democratic Party is absurd.

The shift of leadership from Tammany to the Flynn and Kelly machines in Bronx and Brooklyn does not presage any change in ethics or policy. Once back in office, it no doubt would refrain from the more obvious forms of corruption—at least until it was firmly intrenched. But the Olvanys, Marinellis, and (Tin-Box) Farleys are still the party's ruling types in municipal politics, and they will continue to shape its character. A person like O'Dwyer or former United States Attorney John Cahill, a Flynn man who may turn out to be the Democratic dark horse, would compel some restraint, but sooner or later characteristics ingrained by more than a century of looting public funds would come to the top.

The return of the party under whose aegis the old Board of Aldermen came to be known as the "Den of Forty Thieves," might have another, more ominous aspect. The New York Democratic Party has always been under the thumb of conservative elements and has been a reactionary force in state and national politics. There is no contradiction between this and Flynn's adherence to the New Deal, which is about as deep-rooted as that of the Southern Democrats, and has the same motivation. At a time when liberal forces in the national Democratic Party are hard pressed to find allies, control of the city could make New York Democrats a powerful foe.

Liberty and Action

BY BENEDETTO CROCE

A MORE special examination is needed of the concept of liberty in relation to action, not now viewed as the criterion of historical interpretation or as general moral direction, but as determinate action in determinate circumstances. If we omit from our survey of the sphere of practice the eternally Vulgar of mankind—those exclusively intent (or intent in the degree of their vulgarity) upon their private business, upon the means of subsistence, upon comfort and pleasure; and if we consider only true men, animated by the earnest search for the common good and so by the moral ideal—those who effectively carry forward mankind with their work —all such are, intrinsically, representatives of liberty. They vary, certainly; they disagree and fight each other on particular issues, but the historical result, which emerges through cooperation, composition, and elision from their different or contrary tendencies, is the creation of a new and richer form of life, and thereby involves the progress of liberty.

The same thing is to be said of the parties which are based upon the variety of men and their problems and tendencies, and designate their changeable groupings. These, provided that they have moral worth and consistency, that is, the will for the common good, and are not mere factions and bands, are also all intrinsically liberal.

Now, if this is how things are, how is it that in the past people have spoken, and even now speak, of a liberal party, specifically liberal, which seems to wish to claim for itself the prestige of liberty? Is there then a party which is not a historical formation or subject to contingency, which champions a philosophical and eternal principle, a philosophical party among political parties, something more and something less than they, and at bottom different, something which therefore does not connect well with them, and like an interloper or intruder becomes tiresome and may seem even ridiculous?

Nothing of the sort. The liberal party is really a party, because it represents a historical situation, and its name, which, like all names, has good etymological rather than logical reasons, is the name of a political party and not of a philosophical school. Its historical character leaps to the eye directly one tries to carry the name to epochs other than its own. Thirst for liberty, fights for liberty, the glory of liberty emerge from every period of history —liberty "which is so dear, as they know who give up their lives for her." Nevertheless, there was no party properly and consciously liberal in the medieval hierarchy, or in the freedom of Greece and Rome, or even in the early centuries of the modern era, when people were working to free themselves from feudalism and theocracy, and fashioning the arms and the rule of the absolute monarchies.

The liberal party came into existence to challenge at one and the same time the outworn and exhausted absolute monarchies and the no less outworn and empty ecclesiastical absolutisms, Catholic or otherwise. Having run through a sort of pre-history in the struggles for freedom of conscience, in the English revolution, in the

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period of "Illuminism," and in the French Revolution, it took form and consolidated itself after the fall of Napoleonic dictatorship and for a century was the dominating factor in European life. In its days of power, like any other party which wins to office, the liberal party made use of the strong hand: it enjoyed or procured the support of certain economic classes, behaved variously in various countries, from time to time carried out necessary agreements and transactions, customary in the world of affairs and so in the world of political affairs. Yet in so doing it did not lose and squander amid material considerations of circumstances and methods that liberty of which *igneus est vigor et caelestis origo,* liberty which is spiritual and moral strength, operating certainly by means of those circumstances and with those practical methods, but never coinciding with them or resolving itself into them. It was said and it was repeated that, when it had risen to rule and become well established in power, and had passed beyond the danger of counter-offensives by the former regimes, the liberal party then lost its splendid virtues, enthusiasm, dash, self-dedication, readiness to fight and to lose its life for the sake of its soul. And cries of distress and alarm were raised as its accustomed forms, the well-marked political divisions of conservatives and liberals, of right and left, and so on, were seen to disappear and to be succeeded by other more prosaic divisions on special or economic questions. None the less it was natural that all this should happen, and that when the war was over the warlike spirit of the past time should be laid down with the weapons of war. The triumph of the liberal party carried in itself, as its logical correlative, the gradual end of that party itself, which had accomplished its goal, and which in order to be of further service had to become something else, had in fact to yield its place to something else.

It was not properly speaking the liberal party—already in some sort thrust into retirement as the effect of its own victory—that entered, as they say, upon a period of decadence and crisis. It was the liberal settlement, which it had advocated and realized and consolidated, that began to be plotted against, threatened, and undermined by a double range of forces, related to each other but not identical. In the range of the intellect these forces were the check to mental, dialectic, and historical modes of thought, modes which had been initiated toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and prevailed in the first half of this latter century, but were now ousted by positivist materialism, and later by a species of irrationalism and mysticism. In the range of social affairs the forces at work were the profound economic changes which robbed certain classes of importance and increased that of others, indeed almost dissolved some while bringing others almost newly into existence or to positions of extraordinary power. This is not the place to describe a process which in its essential lines is clear to everybody's mind, in its past and present development and acceleration.

Questions badly framed and answers worthy of them, solutions which solve nothing, and stupid proposals have followed in the train of this so-called "crisis." The chief and commonest of these brings into doubt the very principle of liberty, and inquires whether human life cannot be better conducted by substituting for thought and criticism an instilled and obligatory belief, and for the deliberations of the will, obedience—an inquiry shown up by the mere formulation of it as unworthy of further discussion. Many, too, are those who resort to the reading of omens to determine whether the future belongs to liberty, or to authority, or to slavery, revealing an anxiety sometimes perhaps not without a hint of nobility. This anxiety, however, directing itself to the solution of a fantastic theoretical problem and vainly circling around it, can but increase to the point of agony and delay recourse to the only means to health, which is to follow the never uncertain path of duty and to nourish in oneself and in others the virtues of liberty.

It is obvious that the great ages of poetry and art are followed, as Dante would say, by the gross ages, and none the less we always long for and desire and prepare with zeal and effort for the coming of the ever-flourishing and classic beauty; so, too, the great ages of thought relax and are succeeded by an age of mere echoers, compilers, or, indeed, by positively forgetful and unintelligent generations, yet the ideal always remains thought, which creates truth, and never becomes not-thought, nor do we devoutly prepare ourselves to become stupid and shortsighted in honor of a stupid and shortsighted century. Not otherwise is it with the ages of liberty, moments of moral brilliance which yield to periods of less splendor and force, of uncertain light, or even of darkness and night. In this extreme case we rediscover the meaning of Vico's *cursus* and *recursus,* and of Goethe's saying that God, when he sees a society increasing in wisdom and understanding, but necessarily ever less energetic because less pugnacious, wearies of it, and breaks the universe into fragments to make room for a new creation. Nevertheless, when periods of barbarism and violence are approaching it is only for the vile and the foolish that the ideal becomes unfreedom and slavery; for others it remains that which alone can be called human, the only ideal which always works. We always tend toward liberty and work for it even when we seem to be working for something else; liberty is realized in every thought and in every action that has the character of truth, poetry, and goodness.

Moral action, then, must not be governed by what is about to happen in the near future, or by what will happen when it happens. For if we suppose that human society enters for one or two centuries, or even for a thousand years, upon a condition of servitude, that is to

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say, of liberty attenuated and reduced to a minimum, of the least possible creativity, approximating the condition of animals, this incident—an incident as short against eternity as a wink of the eye—does not affect morality, does not interfere with its task, or change it. This task is ever to kindle liberty from liberty, and from time to time to select the means and materials adapted to this end. And since new adversaries have moved against it, taking the place of those that, like the absolute monarchies, had been vanquished, while others, weary but not extinguished, have again scrambled to their feet, or at least to their knees, the liberal party, which had been thrust or had thrust itself into retirement for lack of adversaries, today finds the adversaries and with them the ideal conditions for fresh activity.

But at this point the greatest doubts and objections are usually raised, because, it is argued, a liberal party cannot work effectively when the actual conditions in which it was formed and worked in the past no longer exist. For example, there is no longer the same local life and local autonomy, no longer a landlord class which has the capacity and the leisure to take part in the administration and government of public affairs and to pursue political studies, no longer are there industrialists interested in competition and in free trade among nations. In place of these, we see everywhere the centralization of administration and government, masses of city workers and agricultural laborers with their respective mass leaders, industrial monopolies, and so on. What such noble minds as De Tocqueville, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and Italians of the right after 1870, caught a glimpse of as they reflected on the future of liberty, seems now to have happened, and that in an irreparable fashion. The facts have turned against the liberal settlement, and we are invited to resign ourselves to mass governments and to dictatorships.

Those who make this objection forget, in propounding the material conditions, that the fundamental and sole necessary condition for a liberal party is the rebirth of oppression or tyranny, whether lay or ecclesiastical, whatever its particular forms may be (demagogy, dictatorship, Bolshevism, and so forth)—the thesis which substantially provokes its antithesis. And they forget it because, unaware or ignorant of its *igneus vigor* and its *caelestis origo,* which we have recalled, they fallaciously posit liberty as a material and economic fact among material and economic facts. Hence it is natural that they consider it finished with the material conditions with which at one time it was bound up and consider that it cannot be restored until those conditions are reproduced.

"WAIT, MAYBE I DON'T GO! I AIN'T SO SLEEPY."

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But why should liberty desert the world, and man descend from being a man to being a slave or a sheep, just because, instead of the few roads and the poor communications of other days, human society has now at its disposal railways and airways, telegraphs and telephones and radio, means of understanding which facilitate centralization of government and business? Or because, instead of individual cultivation of land, we are now adopting or may adopt agricultural associations or even state agricultural institutions; and instead of free trade, trade which is more or less regulated? Liberty has no objection to make, in principle, to these or similar economic changes, if calculation and economic experience, which are alone competent in these matters, approve of them, in the given conditions, as more useful and more productive than others. Liberty objects to and opposes only this: nationalization of the soul, the sale of that which cannot be sold; and it accepts or rejects all economic changes only with regard to this, its supreme principle.

The premises having been thus reestablished in their true aspect, the correct conclusion to be reasonably drawn is not that a liberal party has nothing more to do in the world and is henceforth, as the journalists say, an "anachronism," but rather that it has enough and too much to do because the antithesis of its thesis has arisen. But a liberal party cannot do its work with the same means that it once used, because its antithesis has not the same form that it used to have. Therefore it has to look for new means, and, constant in its goal, faithful to its own religion, it must renew itself on the practical side, must study other methods of penetrating into minds and hearts, ally itself with other interests, and give life to a new ruling class.

And if someone asks that the program of the regenerated liberal party should be particularized and that the precise norms for carrying out its intention should be described, the request can be met with a smile at the simple-minded questioner. What he would like is to possess, in a few short rules, what must be a varied and complex movement finding its way as it makes it and its means to action in acting, a labor of good sense, of course, of patience, of practical and political skill, of greater or of smaller scope as it may be, not waiting upon programs but putting itself into action every day and every instant. And, to clear up this assertion by an example, in this very instant the writer of these pages is in his way collaborating toward that end, dissipating the clouds of certain bad political reasonings and allowing to flow in with the rays of the sun a little of that warmth of which the need is great. Strong impulses, the opening of new ways to action, resolutions in moments of crisis are more especially reserved for the apostles and political geniuses. There is no reason to suppose that there will be less of these in a world which has need of them, and by its own efforts and labors strives to call them into existence.

The Case of the Spanish Jewels

BY LOUIS FISCHER

TOWARD the end of 1938 the Spanish Republican government rented a handsome villa in Deauville, one of the most fashionable seashore resorts in France. In the villa lived several well-dressed men and several beautiful Spanish ladies. They led the life of rich South Americans spending the season at the playground of Europe's high society.

As Franco's army pushed closer to Barcelona in December, 1938, Dr. Juan Negrín, Loyalist Prime Minister, began to worry about the government's treasures. When the civil war started in 1936, many wealthy Spanish aristocrats, landlords, and industrial magnates fled Republican territory precipitately and could not smuggle out their jewels. The Republic gathered up these fabulously valuable gems. It ransacked private mansions and palaces in the mountains. Its agents tapped walls to find secret safes. In the deserted house of a countess of ancient lineage in Madrid, they confiscated a cache in which was a necklace of black pearls, a diamond tiara, and like knickknacks, worth several million dollars. Similar valuables left in bank vaults by Fascists who were executed or imprisoned were added to the government hoard. Some of the jewels were family heirlooms that had been brought from the Golconda in India when sixteenth-century Spanish explorers sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in search of the wealth of the East.

All articles were carefully catalogued and described. A special guard responsible to Dr. Negrín was put in charge of the collection. Negrín told them they would pay with their lives if anything happened to it.

The entire treasure was in the city of Figueras, near the French border. It had been transferred to that town shortly after the beginning of the siege of Madrid. There was a hoary fortress at Figueras with several subterranean levels which no aerial bomb could demolish.

No one person ever had access to the treasure. Nothing could be taken from it without the written permission of the entire board of custody, which consisted of officials of the Finance Ministry. When the League of Nations' commission which counted the foreign volunteers in Loyalist Spain prior to their repatriation finished its labors, Dr. Negrín and Alvarez del Vayo, the Foreign Minister, wished to show their appreciation of its impartial efforts by giving its chairman, the Finnish General Jalander, and its secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Basch of France, two small presents in the form of inexpensive jewelry. They had to make a special request of the board of custody, which voted to grant it.

As the front crept nearer to Figueras, Negrín gave

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orders to have the entire treasure transported to the chic villa in Deauville. But this was merely a temporary expedient, for if the Loyalist regime collapsed, the jewels would not be safe from the French authorities or from Franco spies. Spanish Fascists had been reported loitering in the vicinity of the villa. Negrín therefore gave instructions for the purchase of an ocean-going yacht.

Catalonia fell. Half a million Spaniards preferred exile in France to life with General Franco. Negrín, Del Vayo, Azaña, and other Loyalist leaders also took refuge in France. Negrín immediately ordered his officials to remove the jewels from France to the Western Hemisphere.

One night in the second week of February, 1939, the well-dressed inhabitants of the Deauville villa put on working clothes and carried huge cases filled with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, pearls, and gold and platinum jewelry down to the sea and loaded them on the yacht Vita. The estimated value of the jewels was $50,000,000. The cargo also contained strong-boxes packed tight with stocks and bonds.

The treasure on the Vita was in charge of Señor Puente, a young officer in the Carabiñeros who had just been promoted to the rank of colonel. He belonged to the Spanish Socialist Party, and Prime Minister Negrín trusted him. Negrín instructed Colonel Puente to place the jewels in the safe-keeping of President Cárdenas of Mexico. They would remain in Mexico until a favorable turn in the wheel of history made it possible for the anti-fascist Republicans to return to Spain and set up a government. Then the treasure would constitute the Republic's financial foundation stone.

The Vita, under Colonel Puente, left Deauville at full speed, and its swift engines carried it quickly away from the shores of Europe toward America. Then it slackened its pace and cruised leisurely. It stopped in a West Indies port to refuel and take on fresh water and food.

Meanwhile, Dr. José Puche, Chief of the Health Service of the Republican army, was racing from Europe to Mexico to act as Negrín's contact man with President Cárdenas.

Colonel Puente was an old admirer of Indelacio Prieto, veteran Socialist leader and former Loyalist Minister of War. Prieto had been ousted from the government by Negrín and sent as Spain's special plenipotentiary to the inauguration of Pedro Aguirre Cerda, the new Chilean Popular Front President. That decorative mission completed, Prieto, filled with resentment against Negrín for having supplanted him and eliminated him from active participation in Spanish politics, took up residence in Mexico City.

From the high seas Colonel Puente sent a radio to Prieto in Mexico. When the yacht Vita anchored at a Mexican port, its jewels were turned over to Prieto. Negrín's special emissary, Dr. Puche, arrived too late.

When the Spanish war ended, Dr. Negrín himself went to Mexico and saw President Cárdenas. He also tried to see Prieto. However, Prieto refused to meet him. An acrimonious exchange of letters took place between Prieto and Negrín. One of Negrín's letters was thirty-eight pages long. Nothing helped. The Mexican government denies that it has any legal control over the Vita's treasure. Prieto has full access to it and can from time to time attempt to market its gems and valuable papers. Negrín has lost it. Prieto could use the money to assist Spanish refugees.

The beautiful Vita, flying the flag of Panama, rides at anchor in the harbor of Acapulco, Mexico.

Hitler Loses Greenland

BY JOACHIM JOESTEN

IT WAS inevitable that the United States should take action about Greenland. Hitler's designs on this last Danish colony antedate his invasion of Denmark. Years before that invasion he had begun to fan the flames of the ancient feud over this strategic island, with a view to pocketing it at the moment when the two lawful claimants were going at each other's throats. It has long been known in Scandinavia that those activist Norwegians who, under the name of "Dansk-Norsk Ordning," agitated for a reoccupation of Greenland, despite the Hague Court decision in favor of Denmark, were among Quisling's most servile followers. A good example of them, and one of the most fanatic, is Gulbrand Lunde, Minister of Education and Propaganda in the Quisling government.

Since the occupation of Denmark and Norway by the Germans last April, the Quislingists have been high-pressuring Berlin for a new "arbitration" that would take Greenland from Denmark and place it under Norwegian sovereignty, as part of the price for the Norwegian Nazis' recent active, if inefficient, intervention in the war—as compared with Denmark's stolid passive resistance. The idea was well received in Berlin because it fitted Germany's own military schemes so well. After "awarding" Greenland to the dummy government in Oslo, the Nazis could have occupied the island in Norway's name. This seemed the easiest way to settle the issue in a pseudo-legal manner, for the Danish government would probably have refused active help in a seizure of Greenland by the Nazis.

Its recalcitrant attitude was clearly evident in the bold action of the Danish minister in Washington, Henrik de Kauffmann, both on the Greenland question and in the matter of the seized Danish ships. Few representatives of subjugated countries have displayed such courage. However, given the mentality of the Nazis and their complete power in Copenhagen, it was obvious

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that Mr. de Kauffmann's days as the official representative of King Christian in this country were numbered. Although he undoubtedly acted with at least the left-handed support of the Danish King and his Cabinet, it was inevitable that the Nazis would quickly force Copenhagen to repudiate the agreement and to disavow or recall its minister to the United States.

Greenland has popped up again and again as one of Denmark's hottest issues. The Danish Nazis have always accused Prime Minister Stauning of planning to sell the island to the United States, one way or another. As late as November, 1940, the Danish Nazi organ *Faedrelandet* (the *Fatherland*)—now also called *Forraedrelandet* (the *Traitors' Land*)—violently assailed Stauning because he had done nothing to prevent the United States from "establishing air bases in Greenland."

At the time such air bases had not yet been constructed but they were doubtless being prepared. What probably caused this outburst of Nazi wrath was the interception of a German "meteorological" expedition of some fifty armed men by the Norwegian gunboat Fridtjof Nansen, which was patrolling the Greenland waters in cooperation with the British. The Nazis were captured and interned as soon as they set foot on the Greenland coast. About the same time, Norman Davis, an emissary of the American Red Cross, uncovered on a visit to Greenland the beginnings of a Nazi fifth column. It was operating there under the leadership of a Herr Moritz, a German citizen who had come to the island on the pretext of dealing in seal hides and fats, but who actually had been sent to pave the way for a coming occupation.

German strategists have long been toying with the idea of an Arctic *Blitzkrieg* that would bring all of the Danish island possessions (Greenland, Iceland, the Faroes) under Nazi domination. The coup was to be carried out by a force of seaplanes and seaplane-carriers stationed at Trondheim in Norway, the nearest point to the islands. If successful, it would have brought about the almost complete encirclement of Great Britain.

There is another interesting aspect of the Greenland question. For some time rumors have been rife in Scandinavia that King Christian of Denmark has had his fill of German "protection." It would seem to be only a matter of months, perhaps weeks, before the King abdicates and the present government resigns. Such a move would doubtless be followed by the setting up of a free Danish government like the several governments-in-exile now operating abroad. Although Greenland may not be suitable as the seat even of a government in exile, it would be an asset in any attempt to reconquer the Danish mother-country from abroad. Economically of course Greenland is more of a liability than an asset, although it possesses the most valuable cryolite mines in the world. But it has great strategic importance by virtue of its position on one of the principal North Atlantic sea lanes.

Everybody's Business

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Bankers Hate Competition

AFTER long and patient investigation and extensive public hearings, at which all interested parties were given an opportunity to express their views, the SEC has decided to enforce competitive bidding in connection with the issue of new securities, or the sale of outstanding ones, by all registered public-utility holding companies or their operating subsidiaries. The new rule applies not only to issues underwritten by bankers and offered to the public but also to private placements. That means that an insurance company which wants to buy a whole bond issue from a utility company will no longer be able to make a private bargain but will have to submit its sealed bid in competition with other institutional investors and bankers.

This provision may give some slight consolation to the investment bankers as a body, since they have been complaining about the way they were losing business through private placements, but it will not reconcile the small Wall Street group whose long-standing near-monopoly of high-class utility issues is seriously threatened by the new rule. Their indignation is likely to be heightened by the knowledge that a great deal of issuing business, which under the old "tied-house" system would surely have fallen into their laps, is now in prospect, owing to the progress being made in breaking up the utility holding companies. In the course of integrating their properties these companies must dispose of extraneous interests, and consequently large blocks of securities now in their portfolios will be offered to the public. After May 7 all such offerings, when a total of more than $1,000,000 is involved, will have to be thrown open to competitive bidding by prospective underwriters.

The elimination of banker influence over utility managements is a duty clearly laid upon the SEC by Congress. The Public Utility Act of 1935 requires the commission to withhold approval of a security issue if it finds that "the terms and conditions of the issue or sale of the security are detrimental to the public interest or to the interest of investors or consumers." Such interests, Section 1 of the act states, are injured "when subsidiary public-utility companies enter into transactions in which evils result from an absence of arm's-length bargaining or from restraints of free and independent competition."

In attempting to insure arm's-length bargaining in respect of utility security issues, the SEC has hitherto relied on a rule prohibiting the payment of any underwriter's fee, except where participation was limited to 5 per cent of the total offering, to any affiliate unless the affiliate had been awarded the securities as the most favorable bidder in open competition. But this rule proved difficult to enforce. Leading investment bankers continued to negotiate, as managing underwriters, with concerns to which they were affiliated. When the SEC challenged their right to obtain an underwriting fee, they always blandly denied that any affiliation existed between them and the utility concerned. In more than one

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instance such denials have irresistibly reminded me of the equally vehement protests habitually made by notorious followers of "the party line" when it has been suggested that they are affiliated with the Communist Party. Under such circumstances some weight must be given to constructive evidence. In explaining the transmission of sound and light our physicists have been forced to hypothecate the intangible something they call ether; so too we can only account for the concentration of utility underwriting among a handful of Wall Street houses by hypothecating an invisible but magnetic link between them and certain electrical empires.

Such a link, the SEC recently ruled, exists between Morgan, Stanley and Company and the Dayton Power and Light Company, and as a result it ordered the surrender of an impounded underwriting fee earned by the investment bankers in connection with the Dayton company's bond issue in February, 1940. The ruling pointed out that partners of J. P. Morgan and Company held a large part of the preferred stock of Morgan, Stanley and Company and thus had an incentive to get business for the latter. Further, it was asserted, J. P. Morgan and Company occupied an influential position in the United Corporation, a holding company they had organized in 1929, so that its wishes in regard to the choice of an underwriter for the corporation or its subsidiaries would carry unusual weight. As the Dayton Power and Light Company was controlled by Columbia Gas and Electric Corporation, which in turn was a subsidiary of United Corporation, the SEC came to the conclusion that negotiations between the Dayton company and Morgan, Stanley and Company were of the arm-in-arm rather than of the arm's-length variety. This inference Morgan, Stanley and Company hotly challenged, declaring that the decision of the SEC was "not based on facts but . . . on what the commission thinks was liable to happen. Such a result belongs to the world of make-believe." In other words, the SEC has no right to assume that the consistency with which United Corporation has handed its underwriting first to J. P. Morgan and Company, and then, when these bankers gave up their investment business, to Morgan, Stanley and Company, is evidence of anything but a purely platonic friendship. It seems easier to believe in ether.

Under the new competitive-bidding rule there will no longer be any necessity for long arguments about affiliation. Every utility holding company or subsidiary of a holding company will, when issuing securities, be obliged to invite bids and award the underwriting to the banker offering the most favorable terms. Opponents of this rule claim it must lead to overpricing and will thus prove injurious to investors. But, as in any other open market, overpricing of securities will provide its own corrective. If a banker is awarded an issue of bonds at 105 and finds on reoffering them at 107 that investors consider the price too dear, he will suffer a loss, and the next time both he and his competitors will be more cautious. On the other hand, underpricing, which is very apt to occur when issues are sold by private negotiation, means that the company concerned is burdened with higher charges than market conditions warrant, and this is detrimental to all its existing security holders.

An even stranger objection, which has been seriously advanced by banking interests, is that the enforcement of competitive bidding would interfere with free enterprise. Thus the National Association of Security Dealers in a memorandum presented to the SEC declared: "Compulsory competitive bidding would lead in practice toward complete government control of the market." Really, it is time a movement was launched to introduce Adam Smith to Wall Street.

In the Wind

A NEW POLITICAL PARTY which will follow the Communist line on foreign and domestic problems may come into being shortly. The American People's Meeting, convened in New York on April 5, appointed a committee to draw up plans for the new organization. It will be based to a large extent on the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, now virtually controlled by Communists, the left-wing of the American Labor Party, and the remnants of the Washington Commonwealth Federation. John L. Lewis may head it.

THE REUTHER PLAN has been rejected, according to the *American Machinist*, manufacturers' journal, because it would mean "labor participation in management" rather than because of "the irrelevant arguments as to whether the plan could actually produce 500 planes a day."

IN NORWAY the Nazis are trying to stimulate the sale of their publications by offering as prizes autographed pictures of Quisling, copies of a book by him, or a day spent in his company. The sales remain small.

AMERICAN Trotskyists are enjoying a boom. Their newspaper, the *Militant*, formerly the *Appeal*, has increased in size, thanks largely to contributions from people who admired Trotsky and wished to help his political heirs after his murder. The Trotsky Memorial Fund has far overshot the expected mark.

THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY, author of "The Soviet Power" and current idol of American fellow-travelers, visited Ivan Maisky, Russian ambassador to Great Britain, a short time after the last Soviet election. Immediately upon being introduced the Dean said: "First let me congratulate you on your government's remarkable victory at the polls."

ELIZABETH DILLING, author of "The Red Network," now writes under the name of the Reverend Frank Woodruff Johnson. As the Reverend Mr. Johnson she is the author of a book called "The Octopus," an anti-Semitic tract which is being widely circulated by American fascists.

A FEW WEEKS ago a Guatemala City evening paper printed a letter criticizing the government. Immediately the rumor was spread that this unheard-of event was designed to prove to the just-arrived editor of *The Nation* that freedom of the press existed in General Ubico's tight little dictatorship.

[*The $5 prize for the best item received in March goes to D. A. M., of 415 Lexington Avenue, New York City, for his story about William Randolph Hearst and "Citizen Kane," published on March 29.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

Gone with the Mules

SYMPATHY for the tenant farmer is spreading in spite of the war. This is what they tell me in the office of the organization for share-croppers in New York. I know the ladies of the New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs have asked to hear a speech about him in May. The ladies' interest in the tenant farmer is splendid, but it is also a little late.

Tenancy is decreasing. Indeed, in the group of states where the plight of the tenant farmer has seemed saddest —the sixteen Southern states from Maryland through Texas—the figures show that there were nearly 350,000 fewer tenants in 1940 than there were ten years before. Those who hoped to abolish tenancy can cheer. Cheer again: land ownership in the same region is increasing. There are nearly 150,000 more farmers who own their own land than there were in 1930, and land ownership has always been the pattern of the American dream.

But if the ladies of New Hampshire and elsewhere will excuse me, I am not going to wave any flags until I have done a little problem in subtraction:

Fewer tenants	339,047
More landowners	143,048
	195,999

That 195,999 is not a figure in pure mathematics. Every item in it is a family of people unaccounted for in the statistics. They are the families which have been pushed even out of the status which touched hearts as far north as New Hampshire. There are more like them. Rural populations have increased while the chance to be even a tenant has declined.

Take Mississippi. Everybody does take it when they want scenes and statistics of sadness. It has 11,315 more landowners than it had in 1930. It also has 32,798 fewer tenants. That means that at least 21,483 families which once may have deserved our sympathy as tenants have now not even that precarious and sometimes seemingly persecuted relationship with the land. They have been set free from tenancy, which means they are free to squat in idleness, to stand on small-town street corners, to hope only for occasional day labor—free to starve but for the intervention of relief. Share-cropping begins to look like a system of security which white men and black men once had but now have lost.

The explanations are simple; possibly they indicate progress. In every Southern state which had as many as 100,000 tenants in 1930, the average size of the farms had increased by 1940. A strange thing is that when the Farm Security Administration helps tenants to buy land, it has in most cases insisted on farms larger than the average in the neighborhood. Sensible farmers did the same thing—when they could. Farms of adequate size are essential for farmer security, but adequate-size farms in most Southern states are within reach of fewer people than the Southern land contains. Profitable farming practices have put wider acreages to work with fewer men, and the heartless plantation owner with the machine is changing a South which, recent statistics show, has more than half the country's farmers but less than a fifth of the country's farm implements.

Man's story is the mule's, but sadder. Man and mule worked so long together in the South. Burrhead and redneck moved up the cotton rows behind the good, brown, much-respected beast. They understood each other and sometimes they thought they understood the land and the cotton—at least until they took the cotton to the gin. Now man is separated not only from the land but from the mule also. More than a million mules disappeared from the Southern scene during the ten years before they were counted in 1940. But last fall Milo Perkins reported that there were a million more people on the cotton farms of the South at the beginning of the present war than there were when the first world war began. Maybe men ought to die like the mules. Maybe men ought to breed with at least a mule-dealer's understanding of possibilities. They don't. In the South they will not soon. There is no such religious opposition to birth control in the South as there is in New England, nor any such general practice of it either.

The share-cropper may disappear. The people who once could hope to be share-croppers will not. They will be fed or they will steal. They would just as soon steal a factory as a hen. Indeed, when the situation was less acute, New Hampshire blamed them in part for the collapse of the state's biggest cotton mill. The people who could once hope to be share-croppers will not mind the accusation again. They will be glad to deserve it. Maybe the ladies in New Hampshire are wise, even if they are late, in wanting to hear about share-cropping. It may be high time they began to listen. And if I were going to talk to them, I'd say, "Look out, ladies, Mississippi is a good deal closer than you think it is." And I'd hate to see New Hampshire gone with the mules.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Notes by the Way

THE annual report of the New York Public Library tells us what we already knew: that the reading of books dropped sharply during the *Blitzkrieg* days of last spring and summer as the result of that obsession with newspapers and the radio which all of us experienced. In general, literature tends to fall not only into disuse but into disrepute in such times as the present. The writer who has the strength to go on writing according to his bent and his conscience is likely to be considered weak or irresponsible. Similarly, though a great deal of lip-service is paid to the "heritage of the past," which is distorted to fit its particular use, all the circumstances conspire to persuade us, as readers, that it is almost a moral duty to keep up with the latest edition of today's newspaper, and that, conversely, any desire to experience the resolutions and pleasures of "pure" literature is at best queer, at worst an unworthy impulse to escape. No one would expect a prize fighter to fight all evening with no time out for rest and refreshment, but if you are caught reading Dante or Jane Austen between the rounds of the war of nerves you are likely to be considered not quite patriotic.

Especially in the United States, where this suspicion of "the classics" is endemic, the tendency toward literature-baiting is likely to grow. It is a stupid and self-defeating attitude rising out of an ignorance, induced by non-reading, of the reasons that motivate the desire to "escape" into the republic of letters—a desire which one encounters these days, despite the general disapproval, in strange as well as in familiar places.

One of the primary appeals of the great literature of the past in a time of disorder, though less obvious than some others, is outlined, in a different context, by T. S. Eliot in Tradition and the Individual Talent, one of the essays in "The Sacred Wood." The historical sense, he writes, "compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer, and within it the whole of the literature of his own country, has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." And again, "The existing monuments [of literature] form an ideal order in themselves. . . ." It can be described as an order because all great art has sprung from a common and unifying source, the human mind and imagination driven by the two compulsions, for free play and, paradoxically, for some kind of system—of religion, philosophy, politics, or art—that will transcend and establish control over contemporary chaos, personal or social. Most of the particular systems have fallen of their own inadequacy; what remains to us are the "monuments" of idea, form, and evocation which comprise Mr. Eliot's "ideal order."

It is these elements of order, underlying unity, and cumulative, uncoercive authority—and the fact that even a skeptic can accept the poets' miracles of Dante and Shakespeare—that make the "sacred wood" a source of strength and renewal when the times are out of joint. And so if I were a committee-fancier, I should advocate as one form of defense against fascism at home and abroad, not a subtle burning of the books but an Association for the Actual Reading of the Great Works of Literature. I specify actual reading, for one characteristic of the sacred wood is that it does not exist until one enters it; but actually to enter it is to acquire a historical sense, to oppose to what may seem to schoolgirls a tidal "wave of the future," not the all-too-feeble breakwater of contemporary and negative "anti-fascism," but the firm shore of a past which nevertheless "has a simultaneous existence" and composes an order simultaneous with the present. As Benedetto Croce declares in the title of his new book, history is in essence the story of liberty. That is doubly true of great literature; and actually to read it is to gain a fresh faith in the invincibility of the free human spirit which it is the primary and futile purpose of fascism to destroy.

Croce's book, by the way, has been received with acclaim in England. The *Manchester Guardian,* according to a cable to the American publisher from George Allen and Unwin, declared that the "greatest living Italian has struck blow for liberty," while the *Spectator* called it the "most powerful because most profound statement of the principles for which we are fighting."

Also by the way, I should like to register my profound disgust with one of the most recent examples of literature-baiting, the publicity-seeking announcement of *Books Abroad,* a journal published at the University of Oklahoma, that the "Divine Comedy" had won the most votes in a poll of "eminent critics" to determine the world's worst book. Twenty-six "critics" (the quotation marks are mine), according to *Publishers' Weekly,* "let down their hair and cooperated in the effort to choose the duds of literature, but Lewis Mumford and Rolfe Humphries declined to take part in what they considered a presumptuous enterprise." I salute Messrs. Mumford and Humphries.

EDGAR ALLAN POE'S "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was published a hundred years ago this month. And the *Virginia Quarterly* prints in its current issue an article called The Case of the Corpse in the Blind Alley which may be taken, according to the editors, as commemorative of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the detective story It is a blistering attack by Philip Van Doren Stern on the art as it is now practiced.

In the course of his criticism, which I found both convincing and interesting, Mr. Stern punctures the common belief that detective stories are enormously popular—"they are popular as a type, but no one of them is read widely." For mystery stories are not sold in any great quantity directly to the public; probably as much as 85 per cent of all copies circulated reach their readers through rental libraries. This system insures a minimum sale of about 1,500 copies for almost any mystery; it also places a top limit of about 3,500 copies for even the best ones. But while Mr. Stern grants that

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this state of affairs may serve to keep good authors from entering the field, he thinks the principal difficulty is the fact that the mystery story is today being written for a purely professional audience (mostly men) clustered about circulation libraries, which demands not a book but a drug and is in a position to enforce its demand. According to Mr. Stern, it is forever complaining that mystery stories get worse and worse. "Yet heaven help the writer who tries to give them anything but the old familiar brand!"

What the murder story requires if it is to recover its standing as literature is what any story requires—characterization, atmosphere, maturity, and an understanding of human action and motive. "Mystery story writers need to know more about life and less about death—more about the way people think and feel and act, and less about how they die," says Mr. Stern and ends with the wry remark: "It is surely strange that an age so deeply concerned with death as our own has not yet made its mark upon an art that deals only with killing."

MISCELLANY: Bills to make permanent the present temporary postal rate of 1½ cents a pound for books (it extends only to July 1) have been introduced in the House and the Senate. "By far the greatest of the benefits," says *Publishers' Weekly*, "have been enjoyed by book-buyers, libraries, and readers in the more distant parts of the country, those least well served by bookstores and libraries." That is exactly what the low rate was designed to accomplish. Drop a letter to your Congressman. . . . The committee formed by friends of James Joyce, shortly before his death, to obtain financial aid for him and his family points out that the expenses incident to his illness and death make the raising of funds all the more necessary, and asks for contributions, however small. Joyce's wife is in Zurich; his daughter Lucia is still in a sanatorium in occupied France. The committee includes, among others, Mary and Padraic Colum, Bennett Cerf, B. W. Huebsch, Eugene Jolas, and Edmund Wilson. Checks should be made payable to Mrs. Maria McD. Jolas, Chairman of the Joyce Fund, and sent to 1049 Park Avenue, New York City.

MARGARET MARSHALL

The Fear of Abundance

THE DEVIL OF THE MACHINE AGE. By J. Russell Smith. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $1.50.

"FOR ages," writes Professor Smith, "we *worked to overcome scarcity,* but now, forced by a new technology, we strive to *plan scarcity.* . . . Abundance with its glutted market has become the devil of the machine age; *relative scarcity* its god." [His italics.]

The purpose of this popular sermon in economics is to show how planned scarcity is paralyzing our economic system. Everyone of us, in his capacity as producer, seeks to restrict the output of his product in the hope of maintaining its price—that is to say, the amount of other products for which it can be exchanged. Through trade associations, gentlemen's agreements, combinations, and sometimes through outright monopolies, manufacturers attempt to limit production to the amount which the market can just absorb at a prearranged price and profit. If the capacity of the market diminishes, then output must be reduced even though plant and labor are rendered idle. Labor organizes for the same purpose: to maintain or raise wage rates, to diminish hours, and to restrict recruits to its ranks. For if labor is to maintain its price, it must contrive to make itself scarce. And so it is with the farmer, but his problem is more complicated owing to the vagaries of nature and the difficulties of organizing so scattered a group of producers. Consequently, he depends on legal restrictions obtained by political pressures.

But if we are all producers, so are we all consumers, and in that capacity we are anxious to buy as cheaply as possible. Thus we regard competition as a sovereign remedy for every industry save our own. But most of us think of our standard of living chiefly in terms of money income, that is to say, what we receive as producers, and much less in terms of its exchange value. We lay relatively less stress, therefore, on our economic interests as consumers and normally do not organize to protect those interests. Nor do we realize that if all producers succeed in restricting output and maintaining prices nobody gains an advantage, and there must be a smaller supply of exchangeable goods and less real income for everyone.

That, as Professor Smith points out, was roughly the result of the attempt under NRA to maintain prices at a point where everybody could make a secure profit. For that reason the Supreme Court decision in the Schechter case was "a face-saving godsend" to a great many people in industry and in the Administration. But the stronger producer groups continue their restrictive practices even though the recent activities of the Department of Justice have made them more cautious.

At the present time the nation is trying to raise production to new heights under the stress of the war emergency, and, in certain directions, we find ourselves struggling once again with the problem of scarcity. But the question of how to turn potential abundance into a blessing instead of a curse will demand an answer even more insistently when the war ends. We shall have to find a way of organizing abundance so that all may work and the fruits of their labor be fully distributed.

Have the business men of this country got a solution for this problem? Professor Smith is skeptical, but he insists that "in the long run the resources of the country will be made to support its people," and that if this cannot be achieved within the framework of private enterprise, it will be done by the government's taking over a substantial part of industry. Professor Smith is no admirer of state socialism, and business men, therefore, may pay attention to what he says even though he makes mincemeat of some of their most cherished prejudices. He writes with admirable common sense and he brings to the subject of economics the geographer's constant awareness of physical realities—an awareness which seems lacking in all too many economists.

I have only two mild complaints to offer. I wish he had developed more fully the positive remedies he puts forward for curing artificial scarcity. And some protest must be made to his publishers in regard to the pricing of this book. A dollar and a half is altogether too much for a slim volume of under a hundred pages and must serve to restrict the abundant circulation it deserves.

KEITH HUTCHISON

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Sammy Glick

WHAT MAKES SAMMY RUN? By Budd Schulberg. Random House. $2.50.

IF YOU have frequently looked with fascination at the unmistakable lineaments of big business and have tried to solve the mystery of what must have been the living transformation of the individual into the corporation, then you will follow the quest for the answer to the question posed in the title of Mr. Schulberg's book along with Al Manheim, through whose eyes we pursue Sammy's life history. Sammy Glick's progress from newsboy to grand mogul of Hollywood is accomplished through singleness of purpose, moral anarchy, and the recognition of the nature of the race he runs faster than the treadmill he runs upon. Sammy steps into everyone's shoes—and wears them, and it is with a sense of utter inadequacy that we see the sureness of his footing, as well as the amount of his salary, increase, and watch his features, his walk and talk and personality, alter as he appropriates the trademarks of intelligence, culture, and charm of those pedestrians who pick themselves up to find Sammy far ahead rounding still another corner of his career.

The question is, of course, not answered, as it could scarcely be since it's the riddle we live under, but it is the measure of the honesty and sincerity of the book that Mr. Schulberg explores the question seriously and, what is more, finds his own attempts at a conclusion inconclusive. In the search for an answer the line of the plot is deftly played out in the person of Al Manheim, whom the problem obsesses. Al would like merely to free his mind of Sammy by a hatred worthy of him, but in the widening circles of his search he finds hatred inadequate and is forced through the very excitement and urgency of the chase into the battlefield of the individual and society. In his search Al is educated; Sammy is left alone with the fear of being overtaken: "You can't have your brothers and eat them too."

This is Mr. Schulberg's first novel, and he is more concerned with saying what he sees and feels than with how he says it, and that is as it should be. The book is uneven; the first part is badly written and developed; there is too much of the paltry patois of small-story sophistication and typewriter chatter. One finds a paucity of expression ("her body trim and cool and confident"), and the snappy conversation is at times oh so nugatory. But each of these charges is controverted as one turns the pages, and it is a pleasure to watch the author write through and past what really is his "first novel" to find his own form and content. Toward the end Mr. Schulberg does say what he wants to say, the writing is good, the plot blooms, and the form is there. Hollywood, that junction of theater and audience, is more honestly, amusingly, and instructively covered than in any other book I know. It is an integral part of the story and the natural habitat for Sammy.

I do, however, protest against the niggardliness of the expression of sincerely felt emotions that recalls bright books now faded. The careful indifference, the special argot of understatement and underplaying, the determined bathos of the characters before the probity of their feelings are exasperating. And the quantity of Scotch consumed in the course of the book is alarming, far too expensive for the sober writer's budget, to say nothing of the sober reader's. One remembers the flowing bowl of the twenties, both literary and economic, and ponders the reason why the novelists of that generation are still suffering from hangovers.

H. P. LAZARUS

De Gaulle on Warfare

THE ARMY OF THE FUTURE. By General Charles de Gaulle. With a Foreword by Walter Millis. J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.

OF ALL De Gaulle's writings, this is the best known. It was first published in France in 1934 under the title, "Vers l'Armée de Métier." It contains one of the first concrete proposals for an armored force, and in 1937 Paul Reynaud produced some rather convincing evidence to show that General Guderian had leaned heavily upon this book in forming the new German *Panzer* divisions. The French High Command, however, saw little in the book, and soon after it was published, Weygand went to the length of directing a certain Lieutenant Colonel Didelet of his staff to write an article attacking De Gaulle's ideas. It was shortsightedness such as this that lost the war for France.

De Gaulle envisioned an army of six large armored divisions, which, with supporting infantry, artillery, aviation, and services, would number about 100,000 men. The tanks would be supported in their break-through mission by attached air units, and the infantry and artillery would follow up to develop and hold the positions taken by the tanks. In describing how this armored army would operate, De Gaulle brings in all the features of the modern battle—the crushing blow of the armored units followed by swift, outflanking maneuvers, the relatively small number of casualties, and, finally, the rapid collapse of the enemy. Indeed, De Gaulle so closely approximated the Sedan break-through—where the Germans actually broke the French armies with a force of between five and seven armored divisions—that his book must rank as an outstanding example of military prophecy.

However, this prophetic theme obscures the main point of the book, which is indicated in the original title—"Toward a Professional Army." De Gaulle contended that future battles would be decided by the armored-air team. He proposed that the principal defense forces of his country should consist of the armored army previously described. This would mean, on the one hand, a much smaller number of men required for military service, and on the other, a much greater amount of equipment. Moreover, this equipment would be of such a highly technical nature that it would be obviously impossible to train part-time conscript soldiers to use it efficiently. Therefore De Gaulle suggested that the mass army—"the nation in arms"—be abandoned, and that a return be made to the old small professional army of long-service volunteers.

De Gaulle advanced many irrefutable reasons for this return to the eighteenth-century-style army. It would be vastly more efficient in war, much less costly in men, and cheaper to operate in the long run. De Gaulle further states that a really professional army would be indifferent to politics. He does not consider the question that it might also be indifferent to democracy. The problems raised by De Gaulle are by

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no means solved, nor will they be for some time to come, but it is plain that the military establishments of all nations are moving along the lines he indicated, "toward a professional army."

HARVEY S. FORD

The Soong Family

THE SOONG SISTERS. By Emily Hahn. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $3.

THE famous Soong sisters are already fairly well known to Americans, though this reviewer knows of only one other full-length biography—"Three Sisters," written by Pearl Buck's sister, Cornelia Spencer, which appeared in 1939. Emily Hahn is the clever American novelist whose sketches and stories are familiar to readers of the *New Yorker*. She has lived in China during the past five years, and her material for "The Soong Sisters" was collected with the cooperation of Madame H. H. Kung and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The elusive Madame Sun Yat-sen, however, refused to be interviewed and was therefore rather neglected and misinterpreted in the story. This has always been the stumbling block confronting writers who have aspired to do such a composite biography. Evidently Madame Sun prefers not to be considered a pillar of the ruling "Soong dynasty," but an independent torch-bearer for her husband's revolutionary principles. For her own story, we shall doubtless have to await an autobiography.

The Soong family is the most fascinating human-interest story in China, and Miss Hahn has made good use of her material, especially in the case of the father, Charlie Soong, and in giving a new personalized portrayal of Madame Kung, least known of the three sisters. The author, however, failed to make the most important point about Madame Kung, which is that her financial wizardry has built up what is probably the greatest personal fortune in modern Chinese history. With delicate irony Miss Hahn merely remarks that Madame Kung learned "how much science there is in banking."

This Soong family is almost as much American as it is Chinese, though we have few family Alger stories to match its history. Apprentice Charlie Soong ran away from his uncle's shop in Boston to become cabin-boy on a coastal side-wheeler. He wanted a modern education and was adopted by a Confederate general, who sent him through Vanderbilt University. Charlie went to Shanghai in 1886 as a preacher for the Southern Methodist Church, but made his fortune selling Bibles and foreign machinery. He married the daughter of one of the earliest Christian families in China, and their six children were all educated in the United States from an early age. The three attractive and highly intelligent daughters were sent to Wesleyan College for Women at Macon, Georgia; Eling (usually spelled Ai-ling) and Chingling at the age of fifteen, and Mayling at nine.

Charlie Soong was a secret follower of Sun Yat-sen, "Father of the Chinese Revolution," and on their return to China both Eling and Chingling became Sun's secretaries. Eling resigned to marry H. H. Kung, a Y. M. C. A. secretary. She had four children, developed into an extremely competent *tai-tai*, and has been the power behind her husband's throne ever since. Dr. Kung is now Minister of Finance.

Chingling married Dr. Sun shortly after her return in 1913 and became his right-hand helper and an active revolutionary in her own right. Since Dr. Sun's death in 1924 his widow has been a living symbol of integrity not only in China but for socially conscious people everywhere. She is now in her forties, still beautiful, still bent on achieving the social changes so long delayed in China, and still the idol of youth and of the common people of her country.

Mayling came home from Wellesley in 1917 and was Shanghai's reigning society belle until 1928, when she married Chiang Kai-shek, who soon established himself as the de facto head of the Chinese government. Madame Chiang's charm and energy have been an important asset to that government, especially in winning foreign sympathy. Her books have been widely read abroad.

It is to be regretted that this biography, because it evasively skirts internal family feuds and the political problems which determine the character of its subjects and their role in China, falls short of being a critical work. It is not without authority, however. It is that part of the story which Madame Chiang and Madame Kung wish to see presented to the public, and is to be considered in the general class of "authorized biography." Miss Hahn is eminently qualified to have done a much better study had she not been obliged to pussyfoot in order to secure the necessary cooperation. Nevertheless, "The Soong Sisters" is a delightful and well-written book, and the author has handled a delicate subject with much skill.

NYM WALES

Labor and National Defense

LABOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE. A survey of the Special Labor Problems Arising from America's Defense Activities and a Program for Action. Published by the Twentieth Century Fund and compiled by a research staff headed by Lloyd G. Reynolds of Johns Hopkins University, assisted by Russell Nixon of Harvard University and Charles Killingsworth of the University of Wisconsin. $1.

THE Twentieth Century Fund has rendered an invaluable service by its timely publication of a report on labor in its relation to national defense. Its findings and recommendations are as up to the minute as the morning newspaper, without the distortion, confusion, and alarm which characterize so many of the current press accounts of happenings on the labor front.

Pressed into the book's 130 pages are brief factual analyses of labor requirements and supplies, with all of the complexities involved in the training, allocation, and full utilization of the various skills; the matters of wages, hours, collective bargaining, as well as available procedures and government machinery for adjusting disputes arising out of these issues, and a program designed to cope with immediate problems in the sphere of employer-employee relations. The recommendations are the responsibility of the Fund's labor committee, under whose auspices the study was made, headed by William H. Davis, one of the three public representatives

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of the recently created National Mediation Board; its other members are William Chenery, editor of *Collier's*, Frazier MacIver, vice-president of the Phoenix Hosiery Company, William M. Leiserson, NLRB member, Sumner H. Slichter of Harvard, Edwin E. Witte of the University of Wisconsin, and Robert J. Watt of the A. F. of L. Philip Murray of the C. I. O., another member of the committee, was compelled to withdraw because of lack of time.

The report affirms that continuous, efficient production is imperative to the effort to build America's defense and to aid Britain, and that work stoppages are a grave hindrance to this effort. But how are stoppages to be prevented? "World experience," says the committee, "has demonstrated that the cooperation of labor cannot be gained by compulsion. Strikes in democratic countries can be prevented only by agreement between employers and workers—not by law." Disputes over working conditions are bound to arise. But these can be settled, with the aid of existing conciliation and mediation machinery, provided labor's pledge not to impede production during the conciliation period "be matched by a pledge on the part of management to make no changes in working conditions during that period."

The most difficult type of dispute, the report finds, is that over union recognition. On this point the committee accepts the principle established by the National Labor Relations Act. "The spirit of the statute and a decent respect for prevailing opinion demand, in this period of emergency, universal and ungrudging acceptance by all employers of the processes and implications of collective bargaining. This is a vital need in the interest of maximum defense production."

It is labor's "clear obligation," according to these conclusions, "to seek the legal remedy in preference to direct action." It is recognized, however, that the Labor Board's processes involve serious delay, and since, in the matter of organization, the time element is often the controlling factor, "either side is disposed to make militant changes in the status quo." For this reason the report recommends (1) priority treatment by the board of cases involving defense industries; (2) orders and procedures by an equity court designed to prevent irreparable injury to either party during the delay incident to protracted appeals from the board's decision. The latter, in the reviewer's opinion, is a very difficult, if not impossible, expedient. In recent arguments before the Labor Board by representatives of the Ford and Bethlehem corporations, it was made abundantly clear that they will accept no decision from that body until it has been passed on by the courts. This means years of delay. It is quite beyond the wisdom of any court, assuming its willingness, to estimate what such delay might cost the parties concerned.

The study recommends maintenance of established standards and good working conditions and, above all, maintenance of *real* wages by combating increases in the cost of living. It recommends retention of the Wage-Hour Law, and in this connection clarifies several points on which confusion has run rampant. It reaffirms first of all the more or less accepted fact that long hours are inefficient. But should the emergency call for a longer work week than the established forty hours, the Fair Labor Standards Act does not prohibit it. The law merely provides time and a half for overtime. This does not impose any hardship on defense industries, as

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the added expense can be passed on to the purchaser, and has probably already been figured into contract estimates. On the other hand, it may have two very beneficial effects: the need of added hours of work in defense industries, and overtime pay, may tend to attract more workers, thus preventing a possible labor shortage where speed is most urgent; and it could serve to provide increased earnings during the height of production with an automatic leveling off when the regular work week can be restored.

The essence of the program is flexibility rather than rigidity; its approach is human rather than legalistic. Machinery to carry out the program, it is suggested, should be chiefly of an administrative character, and should include, in addition to that which already exists, an over-all agency along the lines of the recently created National Mediation Board and "a network of joint agencies with equal labor and management representatives." The program is offered not as a blueprint, but more in the nature of an agenda. Its good common sense is refreshing and offers a welcome relief from the stuffy nonsense on the subject which has been spouted of late by tongue and pen in immeasurable volume. Proponents of the program are all men of extensive experience in the field of production and labor relations, and of unquestioned integrity. Their recommendations will undoubtedly be taken with all the seriousness they deserve by a good many Administration leaders, by the more progressive employers, and by a very large segment of labor. One cannot help wishing that this little volume could be put into the hands of all leaders of industry, every editor in the country, and all members of Congress. ROSE M. STEIN

Can Old Age Be Delayed?

MUST WE GROW OLD? By Barclay Newman. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.50.

WE ARE becoming an increasingly elderly nation. Insurance figures show that in 1930 our mean length of life was 63.2 years; one hundred and fifty years ago it was 35.5 years. Ninety years ago one-eighth of the population was forty-five or over; today more than one-fourth of our population is forty-five or over. There has recently been an increased medical interest in the problems of aging appropriate to these facts, and to a corresponding increase in economic and social concern for the aged. The Macy Foundation has just published, under the editorship of E. V. Cowdry, a 750-page digest and synthesis of current knowledge presented technically by a number of competent authorities.

Almost simultaneously there appears this popularly written summary of geriatrics. It is really more than that, however; it is a presentation of the formerly very dull subject of hygiene in a new and very stimulating form. There are no brush-your-teeth and get-eight-hours-of-sleep exhortations in this book. There is, rather, a courageous challenge, implied by the title, of the conventional assumption that age and death are inevitable, with nothing to be done about them. Perhaps, Newman reminds us, death is with human beings, as with animals, always an accident, always unnecessary. Time itself is certainly not lethal. The disorganized hormonic function associated with old age is brought about by many diverse factors, of which time is not necessarily one. Most glands do not show evidence of age changes which cannot be accounted for otherwise; for example, by the lack of iodine. Perhaps, after all, "growing old" and words allied to it are used "only because they summarize under one general heading a great list of phenomena, mostly still without known cause."

The author is neither presumptuous nor arrogant. As a scientifically trained man, he is well aware of the hazard of too great a deductive leap; he recognizes the distrust and condescension which the mere raising of the question will evoke from the tough-minded empiricists, some of whom he quotes. He would probably expect anything but gentle treatment from the present reviewer, committed as I am known to be to the death-instinct theory of Freud, according to which we are all determined to die by some force as ancient as life, and more powerful. But there are ways of attenuating or deferring this instinct.

Mr. Newman is encouraged by such writers as Dr. L. V. Heilbrunn (University of Pennsylvania), who wrote: ". . . the search for a remedy for this universal ailment is not as fantastic as was Ponce de Leon's quest for the fountain of perpetual youth. In the case of some lower animals, as for example flatworms, it is possible to make older animals grow young again; and although such a reversal of physiological age may never be possible to any great extent in animals as complicated as man, it nevertheless seems quite reasonable to suppose that when the nature of senescence becomes more clearly understood, ways and means will be developed to delay its progress."

There, in a word, is the theme of Newman's book; we have already made some steps in delaying the progress of age; can we expect to go further? What has been discovered recently in dietetics, endocrinology, cancer, blood chemistry, vitamins, and normal cell physiology that would encourage us to believe that, by taking thought, we may add days to our years, if not cubits to our stature?

Mr. Newman writes in a clear, sprightly, readable style. He cites sound authorities, and, except for the implications of the title, nothing he says would be objected to by the most orthodox medical scientists. Perhaps his optimism will be as good for us as for our patients. KARL MENNINGER

Published This Week

JAPAN UNMASKED. By Hallett Abend. Ives Washburn. $3.

THE WISDOM OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, INCLUDING THE JEFFERSON BIBLE, "THE LIFE AND MORALS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH." Edited by Edward Boykin. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

THE WAVE OF THE PAST. By R. H. Markham. University of North Carolina. 25 cents.

THE AIRMEN. By Selden Rodman. Random House. $2.

SOCIAL DOCTRINE IN ACTION. A PERSONAL HISTORY. By the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John A. Ryan. Harper. $3.

MEN AND IDEAS. Essays by Graham Wallas. Norton. $2.50.

NEW POEMS: 1940. An Anthology of British and American Verse. Edited by Oscar Williams. The Yardstick Press. $2.50.

WYOMING. American Guide Series. Oxford. $2.75.

THE PENGUIN HANSARD. Vol. I. From Chamberlain to Churchill. Vol. II. The National Effort. Penguin Books. 25 cents each.

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IN BRIEF

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE. By James Street. The Dial Press. $2.50.

A bucolic novel that opens like a leisurely idyl of family life on a Mississippi farm churns up the makings of a feud when Papa Abernathy shoots his daughter's fiancé for "putting in a crop before he'd built his fences." The narrator, Little Hob Abernathy, spins his tale with a good deal of boyish charm in the genuine idiom of rural Southern speech. You can't hurry him, any more than you can hurry a mule, but you'll like him for his honesty and his affection for living things.

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ARMY. By Harvey S. Ford.

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE NAVY. By Hanson W. Baldwin.

WHAT THE CITIZEN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE COAST GUARD. By Hickman Powell. W. W. Norton & Company. $2 each.

These are useful introductory books by well-known authorities for the layman, or prospective draftee, who wants to know the essentials about the composition, operation, and function of the three principal services.

ART

SHOWS of the work of three great, or once great, abstract painters held in New York recently afforded an opportunity to consider the present condition of our most advanced painting. The demise of abstract art has been hailed again and again of late; nevertheless it continues to provide our most stimulating pictures. It is my opinion that the fate of our particular tradition of art depends upon that into which abstract art develops. True, three or four great painters still use representation—Picasso, Matisse, Rouault, Vlaminck—but they operate in very personal veins from which there is no issue for the future. They raise up no promising disciples, for those who follow them are imitators, eclectics, and little else. Representation may return, but it will return only on the basis of what we have learned from abstract art.

Of the artists who have produced the best painting of the last five years or so, without doubt one is Miró. His pictures continue to excite. They may puzzle the layman, but they do not bore his eyes. The show of his recent work at the Matisse Gallery impressed one with the extent to which the modern painter derives his inspiration from the very physical materials he works with. In spite of, and perhaps because of, the freedom it offers, canvas imposes upon the painter a style more or less proper to itself. In the course of time even this style with all its flexibility may become something that confines. The artist will grow to desire a medium the very difficulty and novelty of which will help him to conceive freshly. Klee took to painting on plaster, wood, and scratched canvas. Miró has begun to paint on burlap and fiber board, and with promising results. The coarse surface of the burlap has refreshed his invention, compelling him to tighten and compress his design in order to animate and set off the minuscule criss-cross pattern of the rough stitching. Since the burlap does not present a smooth surface, paint must be rubbed rather than brushed on, and so a new quality of "paintedness" is gained. And although the brick reds, the blacks, yellows, and livid whites are reminiscent of Miró's previous work, the result constitutes on the whole a new and brilliant phase in his development.

As if to emphasize the control exerted by the medium, the water colors executed during the same period make the sharpest contrast to the burlap paintings. Necessarily, paper and water call for different treatment, yet the difference between Miró's water colors and his oils, whether on burlap or canvas, is much greater than the difference, for instance, between the water colors and the oils of Cézanne. Miró's water colors are tenuous, precious, and not altogether satisfactory, but there is something too valuable to dismiss in almost everything he has touched in the last few years, at least to judge from the work that has reached this country. One painting must receive special notice: a long, narrow panel on canvas, full of echoes of primitive art, which with its long tentacular bands of dark blue against cobalt and its sudden touches of vermilion, yellow, and white, was the most completely successful single painting of the show.

How arduous is the career of the abstract painter, how difficult it is to sustain his freshness and growth, is made more evident by Léger's example. The exhibition of his latest water colors and drawings at Marie Harriman's was disheartening. I was never much struck by the bulk of his work, though he does have the ability to integrate seemingly discordant elements into solid, unified compositions. But for a long time he seems to have done nothing but repeat himself under various disguises. By force of repetition Léger's painting has become facile and empty, a matter almost of formula. His color has become more Currier and Ives than ever. Organic objects have replaced the mechanical ones and the abstract forms—Léger was never a consistently abstract painter—and they are used to attain a stale, poster prettiness. In picture after picture the various elements curl themselves into the same neat combinations. There is still that same effect of reconciled flatness and solidity which was one of the most pleasing qualities of Léger's earlier work, but this has become too facile and too decorative; the massiveness is all show. When the abstract artist grows tired, he becomes an interior decorator—which is still, however, to be more creative than an academic painter.

The show of Kandinsky's paintings at the Nierendorf Gallery was composed chiefly of his post-war work (one picture for each year of his career as a painter), but there were enough pictures dating from before 1914 to make manifest how much his work has fallen off since then. The early paintings are semi-abstract landscapes, spontaneous and turbulent in their color; we perceive in them the feeling that went into the actual handling of the paint. Since then Kandinsky's art has become non-objective and excludes all representation. Under the influence, I believe, of some false analogies with the mathematics of music, with music as an art of self-expression, and with platonic notions of essential form, he paints in precise geometrical figures, all ruled lines and circles drawn with a compass. Instead of a picture, however, a gimcrack is produced. The Slavic peasant colors which Kandinsky favors are rich and strong when brushed with the vigor and freedom of his earlier manner, but they become superficial when fixed with draughtsman's precision in dry, careful, spic-and-span diagrams resembling nothing so much as astronomical charts and patterns for dirndl dresses. I do not hold theories to be responsible for the decline in Kandinsky's art; Mondrian has produced very good painting in terms of pure geometry, and Mondrian has theories. It is simply that Kandinsky cannot do it, being the painter he is. All this notwithstanding, Kandinsky is even today not a negligible painter. He still turns out good pictures occasionally—very often under Klee's influence. They

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are best when smallest in format. And this is true of most contemporary painting. For as a rule the modern painter cannot cover large spaces successfully—the revival of mural painting has so far not disproved this. He is at his best when forced to compress and tighten; just as the modern poet finds a page and a half more than adequate to whatever he may have to say in any single poem.

The cases of Kandinsky and Léger demonstrate how easy it is for the abstract painter to degenerate into a decorator. It is the besetting danger of abstract art. We, with our tradition of easel-painting, are not satisfied to have our pictorial art in the form of decoration. We demand of a picture what we demand of literature and music: dramatic interest, interior movement; we want a picture to be a little drama, something, even if only a landscape or still life, in which the eye can fix and involve itself. It is the task of the abstract artist to satisfy this requirement with the limited means at his disposal. He cannot resort to the means of the past, for they have been made stale by overuse, and to take them up again would be to rob his art of its originality and real excitement. That so many abstract artists are not equal to the task does not compromise abstract art—as yet. And when one has exposed oneself long enough to contemporary art, one begins to realize that the unsuccessful pictures of a good many abstract painters are more interesting than the most brilliantly successful pictures of such painters as Grant Wood, Alexander Brook, etc., etc.

CLEMENT GREENBERG

RECORDS

COLUMBIA'S new set of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, made by Bruno Walter with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, I will postpone until I can consider it together with the Victor set of Toscanini's performance with the N. B. C. Symphony, which has not yet arrived.

Comparing the new Stock-Chicago Symphony recording of Brahms's Symphony No. 3 (Set 443, $4.50) with Columbia's older but fairly recent Weingartner-London Symphony version, I find that I prefer the music in the form that Weingartner gives it—the first movement, for example, played with his poised control, his subtly inflected steady pace, as against Stock's sudden whipping up of pace at the beginning of the development section and the coda; or the concluding section of the second movement, taken by Weingartner with only slight broadening of the *Andante,* as against Stock's sentimental dragging. The recorded sound of Stock's orchestra is more voluminous and rich than that of Weingartner's; but Weingartner's has greater clarity and sharpness of definition and better balance. Moreover, the Stock recording loses considerable brilliance on a machine with less than the widest frequency range; whereas on such a machine the Weingartner violins continue to sing out. Even on a wide-range machine there is a marked loss of brilliance near the end of the third, sixth, and seventh sides of the Stock set; some sides of my copy produce a rattle on some machines with light and otherwise sensitive pickups; and some sides have noisy surfaces.

Reiner's performance of the Bacchanale of "Tannhäuser" with the Pittsburgh Symphony (Set X-193, $2.50) is superb, but without the flaming tonal opulence of the Victor version. That is because Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony are not Stokowski and the Philadelphia, and because their performance is not as well recorded. It is one of Columbia's better jobs, with fidelity to orchestral color and sonority, but with occasional muddiness and occasional hollowness, and with a sudden raising of volume-level in the middle of the third side that is attended by bad rattling.

There is much finer recording of the sound of an orchestra on the single disc (11517-D, $1) of Debussy's Rhapsody No. 1 made by Benny Goodman and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, but there is an occasional rattle on this one too. The work, written as a test-piece for students of the clarinet, exploits the resources of the instrument and those of the orchestra in Debussy's exquisite style and—surprisingly enough—with some musical effect; and Goodman's phrasing is now beautifully sensitive and now engagingly lively, but without all the subtlety Debussy requires. As for the second volume of Rediscovered Music of Johann Strauss (Set 445, $3.50), most of it is pretty dull, the performances by Barlow with the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony are fair, the recording is coarse.

One outstanding April release from Columbia is the Budapest Quartet's performance—extraordinary in the ways that this unique group's performances are, and well recorded—of Beethoven's Op. 18 No. 1 (Set 444, $4.50). And a single disc (71026-D, $1) offers a beautiful and excellently recorded performance of Chopin's Barcarolle by Gieseking. The warmth and intimacy of Schumann's superb Piano Sonata in G minor are not in the work as it is now assaulted and battered, now sentimentalized by Sascha Gorodnitzki (Set X-186, $2.50). And Bach's Church Cantata No. 158, "Der Friede sei mit dir," I find neither interesting nor well sung by David Blair McClosky, baritone, who has recorded it with a few instrumentalists and a small chorus (Set X-191, $2).

Some outstanding jazz performances that were recorded here for English Parlophone several years ago are being released by Decca in albums entitled Gems of Jazz. The first (Set 200, $3.50) includes one of the finest of the performances, "Willow Tree" (18108), with exquisite singing by Mildred Bailey and beautifully sensitive playing by Teddy Wilson, Johnny Hodges, and Bunny Berigan; and almost as good is their "Downhearted Blues" (18109). While these are the best there are good things on the other records: "The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise," with Jess Stacy, Gene Krupa, and Israel Crosby, and one of Mead "Lux" Lewis's performances of his "Honky Tonk Train Blues" (18110); "Twelve Bar Stampede" and "Feather Bed Lament" (18111), with Joe Marsala, Benny Carter, Pete Brown, and Billy Kyle; "Tillie's Downtown Now" and "The Buzzard" (18112), and "What Is There to Say" and "Keep Smiling at Trouble" (18113), with Bud Freeman, Berigan, and Claude Thornhill. The "Tillie's Downtown Now" is the performance on the A master; Parlophone issued the performance on the B master, which is better paced and has a better solo by Berigan and the more exciting piano solo by Thornhill.

For those who like American folk music there are Southern Prison Songs, excellently sung by Lead Belly and the Golden Gate Quartet (Victor Set P-50, $2.25); "The Old Chisholm Trail," Songs of the American Southwest, most of them sung with appropriate simplicity and gusto by Tony Kraber (Keynote Recordings, 133 West 44th Street, New York: Set 104, $2.75); and Two Centuries of American Folk Songs, sung by Elie Siegmeister's American Ballad Singers in arrangements and styles some of which I find excessively arty—for example, a street cry made into a canon (Victor Set P-41, $2.25).

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Poll-Tax Corruption

Dear Sirs: Political corruption in the South is the bosom friend of the poll tax. If a voter cannot afford to pay the tax he can arrange with the ward boss for its payment—if he votes *right*. Many political machines buy receipts and distribute them on Election Day with marked ballots, and when the voter returns, he must redeliver the blank ballot received at the polls; this one in turn is marked, and the illegal process continues unabated. Many employers at sawmills and factories pay the tax, then file the receipts away; on Election Day the receipts are turned over to the employee with explicit instructions on how to vote.

A free suffrage has been one of the primary concerns of American democracy since colonial days, and we have eliminated property, color, and sex qualifications. But the state of Mississippi in 1890 initiated a reactionary process whereby the provisions of the Civil War amendments were circumvented. The purpose was to nullify Negro influence, and was born of a deal between Northern Republicans and Southern Bourbons. Southern editors since those days have discounted talk about democracy and have earnestly championed the cause of white supremacy. Southern poll-tax opponents are not, however, interested in the numerical increase of Negro or white suffrage. They would be contented if the tax did what its promulgators planned. But the tax is now an instrument of the political machines, which tap the voting population regardless of the quality of the voter. Today Southern poll-tax reformers are agitating for educational qualifications to weed out the undesirable Southern citizens, Negro and white.

Poll taxes allow Congressmen and Senators to stay in Washington long enough to enjoy the benefits of seniority. It is seldom that these men use their political dominion to support progressive legislation. They have consistently obstructed federal relief, public housing, wage-and-hour legislation, collective bargaining, and the right to strike. In the House of Representatives the Apocalyptic Horsemen, Martin Dies, Howard Smith, Clifton Woodrum, and Eugene Cox, are all from the poll-tax South. And their records speak for themselves.

The constitutional question is still open, for the Butler decision in the Breedlove case that "poll taxes are laid upon persons without regard to their occupation or property to raise money for the support of government or some specific end" was an examination of the tax in the abstract light of the right to tax and the power to collect. However, Justice Butler did not comment on the real question: Does the poll tax obstruct the franchise?

The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution embodies the principle that the right to suffrage is of national importance, and is not to be left to the *exclusive* control of the states. If the states have the right to tax the franchise, they have the power to destroy representative government. There are other questions which the courts have to answer: Does the right to vote in a national election depend exclusively upon the laws of a state? Can a state tax a federal privilege? These are the questions which the Pritle test case is raising, and with enough support it should reach the Supreme Court this year. In the meantime, the Geyer bill (H. R. 7534), which was tabled during the last session of Congress, must be passed, as must any other important defense measure. This law, introduced by a California Congressman, makes it unlawful for any state to require the payment of a poll tax as a qualification for voting or for registering to vote in a national election.

Southern politicians argue that the repeal of the poll tax as a qualification to vote would litter the government with "niggers" and end white supremacy. But this is untrue, as every Southerner knows: literacy tests, residence qualifications, intimidations, and white primaries work remarkably well to disfranchise the Negroes. In North Carolina, a repeal state, the Negro's vote remains as insignificant as it is in Louisiana, a certificate state, where less than 1 per cent of the Negroes vote.

The repeal of the poll tax is the specific problem of the Southern whites, but it is of importance to every citizen in the United States as one step toward suffrage reform in a section where "less than one-third of the adults in twelve states that form one-sixth of the nation are able to take part in the democratic process." HERBERT R. COLLINS

Brooklyn, April 11

Steel Capacity

Dear Sirs: I am troubled by an apparent contradiction between the economic theories of Keith Hutchison and I. F. Stone.

Mr. Hutchison, in his article of March 1, suggests that the leaders in the steel industry are against construction of new plant capacity: they are afraid that when rearmament ceases and we are in the midst of a post-war depression all this proposed new capacity will drive steel prices down.

Mr. Stone in his article advances the theory that the leaders of the automobile industry are ignoring suggestions that they use their idle automobile capacity for the production of planes, and instead are having new plants built for this purpose. He states that the construction of new plants has its advantages for the companies.

Why should the steel industry oppose, while the automobile industry apparently favors, an increase of productive capacity? This is a problem which I cannot resolve. HENRY BUHLER

Minneapolis, Minn., April 10

Right of Angary

Dear Sirs: Referring to the seizure of Italian, German, and Danish ships by the United States government, *The Nation* of April 5 states: ". . . the seizure has a firm basis in both international and domestic law. The action was taken under what is known as the 'right of angary.' This right has its roots in long-established custom going back into the Middle Ages."

You may be right. That may be the law. All I know about international law is the little I learned in an inadequate course on the subject taught by an under secretary of the United States Department of State. I often must refer to dictionaries to check words not used every day. Black's "Law Dictionary," third edition (1933), has this to say about Angary, Right of:

> In international law. Formerly the right (*jus angariae*) claimed by a belligerent to seize merchant vessels in the harbors of the belligerent and to compel them, on payment of freight, to transport troops and supplies to a designated port. It was frequently exercised by Louis XIV, of France, but as a result of specific treaties entered into by states not to

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exercise the right, it has now come to be abandoned.

At the present day, the right of a belligerent to appropriate, either for use or for destruction in case of necessity, neutral property temporarily located in his own territory or in that of the other belligerent. The property may be of any description whatever, provided the appropriation of it be for military or naval purposes.

Requisition of neutral property is justified by military necessity and accordingly the right of angary is a belligerent right, although the claim of the neutral owner to indemnity properly comes under the law of neutrality.

It would be helpful to those of us who have long regarded Black as an authority if you would state rather precisely which of the paragraphs you think governs the case of our seizure of Italian, German, and Danish ships. Or did the passage of the Lease-Lend-Give-Away bill make us *ipso facto* a belligerent? JUNE PURCELL GUILD

Seattle, Wash, April 14

Tribute to Zabel

Dear Sirs: May I ask a few inches of space to salute Mr. Morton Dauwen Zabel's review A Tribute to Milles (issue of March 22)? To find a critical vocabulary, critical standards, and a frame of reference with real meaning was a rare pleasure. This is a period when the inanities of Mr. Jewell and the obscenities of Mr. Craven are accepted as criticism and authority. The few real critics, such as J. J. Sweeney and E. M. Benson, seem to write little or not at all. Could not you, sirs, persuade Mr. Zabel to write regular art criticism for *The Nation?*

JOHN ANTHONY THWAITES

Mexico City, March 31

Welsh Vowels

Dear Sirs: Louis B. Salomon's interesting review of John Cowper Powys's "Owen Glendower" in your issue of January 25 is marred by an unscholarly reference to "bygone Cambrian celebrities without a vowel to their names." Perhaps it is too much to expect that the living daily language of more than a million people of the British Isles should be known to scholars on the other side of the Atlantic when so many scholars nearer to Wales reveal such striking evidence of their ignorance of it and its literature; but one cannot allow such a remark to pass unchallenged for all that. There are no Welsh words or names without vowels: Mr. Salomon's error arises from the fact that Welsh has its own orthography, which is not that of the English language—hardly a strange phenomenon in view of the fact that Welsh is a much older language and has a written literature going back to the days when English as now spoken was still an unborn tongue. Welsh has more vowels than English: for example, *w* is both a vowel and a consonant; so are *y* and *u*. So that the word *Cwm,* which, to an English-speaking person, is an unpronounceable word of three consonants, is actually a word with a middle vowel. In fact, the English have borrowed this noun to name some of their most beautiful valleys—coombe, as in Coombe Martin. The Welsh *Cwm,* more economical in its spelling, is pronounced pretty much like coombe, which to a Welshman without knowledge of English would be unpronounceable.

Possibly Mr. Powys was in the wrong, too, in not giving an English version of these names, seeing that he has anglicized the name of Owen Glendower, which in the Welsh is Owain Glyndwr.

D. RAYMOND JENKINS

London, England, March 8

Farmer's Lament

Dear Sirs: Last February 17 dairy farmers went to the polls throughout the New York milkshed and voted 99.5 per cent in favor of amendments to the federal and state orders which will bring us a better hundredweight price for our milk. No one thought these amendments would give us everything we want; yet they are a decided improvement, and nothing prevents the orders from being further amended. But no good will be accomplished for the farmer by the increase in the fluid price classification. Increases in the fluid price classification will react against the consumer—the farmer's market—as it opens the way to instant increases in the retail price. This will certainly cut down consumption.

Fluid-milk consumption would not be as high as it is today if it were not for relief milk and penny glasses of milk provided for children in schools. If we insist on an increase in the fluid classification, many people buying bottled milk will begin purchasing evaporated and powdered milk.

The price set on the fluid classification is a fictitious one, and anyone advocating a raise in this price class is not trying to help the farmer. This is a smoke screen behind which the dealer is helped to the farmer's money.

Farmers are interested only in the blend price. Regardless of any plan which is put forward, whether it be the Young plan or any other, it is still the blend price that concerns the farmer. The Young plan is nothing more than the quota system, and farmers are not interested in the quota system.

Ways can and must be found to raise the blend price without putting an added burden on consumers.

RUTH E. HILL

Jamesville, N. Y., April 10

CONTRIBUTORS

WILL CHASAN has contributed articles on current politics to *The Nation* and other periodicals.

BENEDETTO CROCE, one of the world's most distinguished philosophers, will soon publish in this country "History as the Story of Liberty," which will contain the article in this issue.

JOACHIM JOESTEN, a German journalist who prophesied the invasion of Denmark in his "Rats in the Larder," has just arrived in this country after an exciting flight from Scandinavia.

LOUIS FISCHER served for many years as *The Nation's* correspondent in Russia and other parts of Europe. Duell, Sloan, and Pearce will shortly publish his autobiography, "Men and Politics," of which the article in this issue is a fragment.

HARVEY S. FORD is the author of "What the Citizen Should Know About the Army."

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